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WEATHER ON THE WEB
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TWO WHEELS GOOD
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Garden makeovers by modem

BRITAIN'S BEST-SELLING INTERNET MAGAZINE!

ANNA FRIEL
HOW THE HOTTEST STARS ARE USING THE WEB
www.netshopuk.co.uk/annafriel

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stepbystep The pain-free guide to getting online

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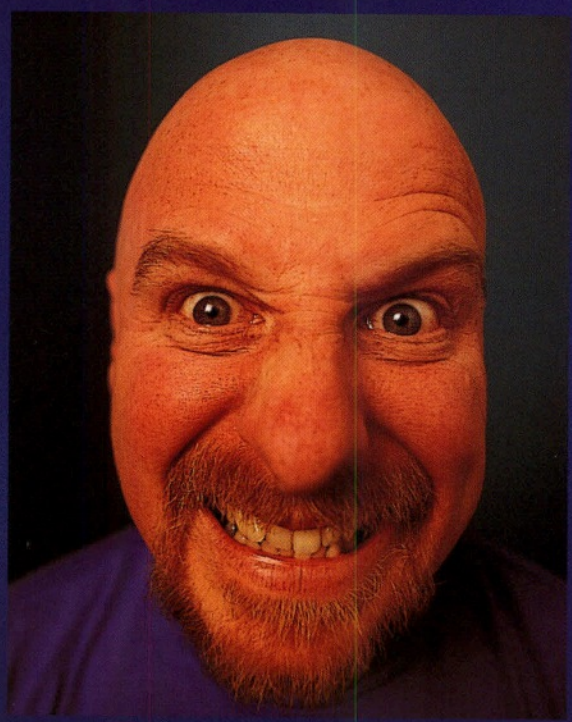

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Flick before you click

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step by step The pain-free guide to getting online
Watching a clip online makes you want to see the real thing

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: ALLAN STRUTT/SYGMA. THIS PAGE: KOBAL

The film and the music industries couldn't be further apart than in their attitudes towards the Internet. Movie-makers love the Web, clogging up bandwidth with trailers, spin-offs and merchandise so fast that the sites of stars like our lovely cover girl, Anna Friel, are only just catching up. In their wake follow the critics and the fans – see p48 for the big picture.

But mention the Net to a record company executive and watch his face turn purple. The music 'biz' sees the Web as nothing but a way for both bands and fans to give away their precious product. So no more royalties, no more mark-ups, no more record labels...

Why the difference? It's true, Hollywood hasn't been MP3-ed: no one's yet found a way to shrink a movie into a ten-minute download. But there's more to it than that. With the exception of any film financed by Lottery money, we're in a golden age of cinema. Punters are queuing to fill state-of-the-art cinemas. Watch a great clip online and it simply makes you want to go and see the real thing.

But with pop music, years of greed and dumbing down has produced a market so perverse that Geri Halliwell can go straight in at number one. Where Aqua get airplay. Where Elton John still has a recording contract. No wonder people want to give this stuff away!

Matthew Bingham, **Editor**
matthew.bingham@haynet.com

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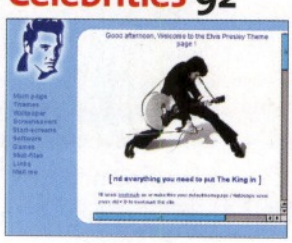

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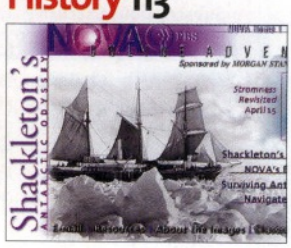

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Browser war set to resume?

NETSCAPE V MICROSOFT A court ruling has restarted the battle

Back in Netscape's halcyon days, nine out of 10 people on the Web used a Netscape browser. Then Microsoft decided to get involved and there ensued a battle royal between Netscape and Microsoft for domination of the browser market. With the latter's Internet Explorer grabbing over 70 percent of the market it had looked like the war was over, but new developments might re-light the blue touchpaper.

After a two-year court case, Microsoft has been found guilty of breaking US antitrust laws in order to monopolise the browser market. The main reason IE secured so many users was the fact that it was included within Windows, so anyone buying a PC would inevitably use Microsoft's browser because it was preinstalled on them.

The implications of the court case will not be known until 24 May when the judge will announce 'remedies'. Although Microsoft is likely to appeal, it can hardly be coincidence that in the same week the verdict was given, Netscape announced its next generation browser – the first big announcement from the company for at least as long as the court case has been ongoing.

Netscape 6 will be available later this year and the company will be hoping that the new features, plus the fallout from Microsoft's case, may help them reclaim some of the market.

Microsoft has been found guilty of breaking US laws

One of the major features Netscape is heralding is the sidebar option on its new browser. This allows you to be permanently connected to Web sites while browsing or writing emails in the main window – for example, you could be connected to a stock market site and get continually updated prices. You simply choose which services you do and don't want.

Other features include the integration of Instant Messaging within the browser and an autotranslate feature that turns Web pages into English. The second preview release will include themes or 'skins', so people will be able to customise the appearance of the browser.

Netscape also hopes to curry favour by reducing the size of the application. There is a preliminary 300k file which offers the choice of four downloads; if you don't need certain features, you don't have to have them, and this reduces file size.

We're not likely to know for a while if the developments are the ammunition Netscape needs to fight back in the browser war, but it's certainly tooled up for another skirmish.

www.netscape.com, www.microsoft.com

Celebrity bookmarks

No11 **Ali G**

The shades *were* very dark...

Tommy Hilfiger

www.tommy.com

If Ali ever decides to change his hat it'll be worth his while checking out the Hilfiger Web site to decide what he wants. After all, the main man from the Staines massive can't be behind the times.

Visit Amsterdam

www.visitamsterdam.nl

The chances are that Ali G would need little encouragement to 'Visit Amsterdam'. That would have everything to do with sampling life away from Staines and nothing to do with those legendary 'coffee' shops.

The Rap Dictionary

www.rapdict.org

Although Ali is always convinced 'I is black', the record scratcher on his new show reckons he falls someway short of it. A stopover at this online Rap dictionary could do wonders for Ali's street cred among the bruvvers.

Interview Experts

www.Interview Experts.com

The key to good interviewing must surely be to comprehensively research your subjects beforehand. Somehow we get the feeling that Ali doesn't *really* understand what's going on in the world of each and every one of his guests, so this will help.

BOYAKASHA!

www.boyakasha.co.uk

There's hardly a celebrity around who doesn't like to wallow in their achievements. This site, complete with sounds, pictures and a dictionary, should do the trick for the quiet, young, conservatively dressed fella.

WHAT'S HOT & WHAT'S NOT

IN & OUT

BANK HOLIDAYS
www.national-holidays.com

FLOWERS
www.rhs.org.uk

EURO 2000
www.euro2000.org

CRICKET
www.lords.org

MISS WORLD
www.geocities.com/TelevisionCity/1625/world.html

EUROPEAN MUSIC
www.geocities.com/TelevisionCity/1812/eschome.htm

CINEMAS
www.britmovie.co.uk

WINTER WARDROBES
www.wintersilks.com

Abba: timeless

KNOWHOW

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT...?

No.11: Dotcom companies

So how come all these new-fangled Internet companies are worth so much money then?

Who knows. None of them are making a profit, most of them have been trading for about five minutes and half of them are run out of a garden shed, but it seems like that doesn't stop them being 'worth' a gazillion pounds.

That doesn't make any sense

It doesn't, does it?

Can't you at least try to explain it?

Seeing as you asked so nicely we'll give it a go. Dotcom companies, as they are so horribly called, are all battling it out for market share. The Internet just keeps growing, so if you have a big market share the theory is you'll be coining it in before long. So while other companies work their arse off to make a few quid and have their valuations based on that, Dotcoms just get a few people to look at their sites and are suddenly worth a fortune.

So if the shares are going up quicker than house prices in London, shouldn't I be investing?

Well, you'd be daft not to be tempted. Just look at all the computer nerds who have been given free shares in Internet company and now find themselves millionaires. But the world is waiting for the dotcom bubble to burst...

Room for growth?

So is it? Going to burst I mean.

If not bursting, it's showing definite signs of deflating. Lastminute.com, those champions of PR but with a turnover of less than £2 million a year, floated on the stock market and it didn't exactly go to plan.

Why not?

The shares floated at 380p, and at the time of writing they're 139p. The flotation was oversubscribed so people only got about 35 shares, which is probably a relief now.

Does this signal a more realistic approach to Internet companies?

I wouldn't bet on it, but it's a start at least.

News Bytes

BITS IN BRIEF

NET LEARNING

A US billionaire is planning to set up an Ivy League-standard online university. Michael Saylor has donated £60 million to the project, which could see online lectures and words of wisdom from the world's 'geniuses and leaders'. What's more, it will be free to enrol.

THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE

Who says business doesn't listen to the man on the street? Salad cream is back on our shelves after a national outcry against the discontinuation of the popular rabbit food dressing. And as well as those bizarre TV ads

Advertising: powerful

to aid the relaunch, there's a funky new Web site as well.

www.saladcream.com

DELIVERING SUCCESS

So what makes a successful ecommerce site? Is it massive marketing *à la* Jungle.com, or just a recognised brand name with good-value products such as Amazon? According to latest

Success could be down to Pat

research it's actually dull old delivery times that matter, and etailers should be looking to fulfil orders as a priority.

www.verdict.co.uk

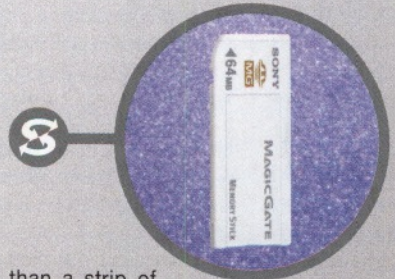
LACK OF EXPERIENCE

Cautionary news: seven out of 10 new British Net companies will go out of business within two years, according to a recent survey. The report suggested that the lack of experience in dealing with the new media would be the major cause of such failures.

PICTURES: RETNA, STOCKMARKET, POSTMAN PAT ©WOODLAND ANIMATIONS/BBC

It's a song, it's a photograph, it's a video clip, it's a book.

www.gocreate.sony.co.uk



The Sony MagicGate Memory Stick is no bigger than a strip of chewing gum, but it has the storage capacity of 44 floppy discs (64 Mb). And it goes places. It connects with our Sony Cyber-shot digital still camera, Digital Handycam camcorder, Memory Stick IC Voice Recorder, Memory Stick Walkman and Sony VAIO notebooks. It allows you not only to digitally store still images, moving images, music, texts and PC files, but transfer and e-mail them as well. You see, when you connect with Sony, you connect with a whole new world.

go create

SONY

Customer information centre 0990 111999 Additional software may be required. Sony, Memory Stick, Handycam, VAIO, MagicGate and Walkman are trademarks of the Sony Corporation, Japan.

'Get my best side, Avatar'

A 3D computer model of yourself. Just imagine that. Paul Winslow already has

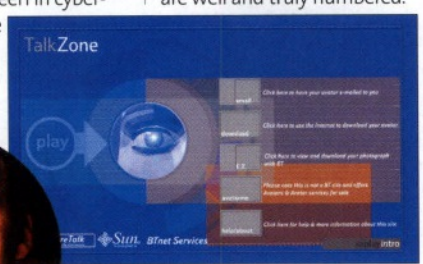
ONLINE CLOTHES SHOPS ARE always going to suffer from the problem that people are loathe to splash out on decent clothes without trying them on first – or are they?

Imagine how easy it would be, though, if you had a virtual you, a computer-generated version of yourself that could be seen in cyber-space (a bit like Rimmer from *Red Dwarf*, but not as ugly or annoying). Well, the technology exists to do this and, if clothes stores are sufficiently forward-thinking, we could soon be 'virtually' strolling into an online store and getting our avatar to 'try on' our kit for us.

'Your avatar could virtually try on your kit'

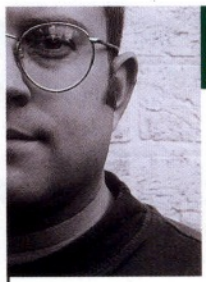
And what about playing games? The next time you're playing *FIFA 2000* your avatar could be playing upfront alongside Michael Owen. Or instead of playing Lara Croft in *Tomb Raider*, you could replace her with yourself.

If you're good-looking, it also means that you'll have a better chance of pulling in online chat rooms because people will be able to see how handsome you are. Ugly people be warned, however: the days of online anonymity are well and truly numbered.



It may seem like a pipe dream, but anyone who's wasted £20 of their hard-earned visiting the Dome may have seen the AvatarBT machine, which creates a 3D animated version of you. You can then download your avatar from ***www.bt.com/talkzone***. At the moment there's not a lot else you can do with it other than show your friends, who'll no doubt point out how big your nose looks. But before long you could be using it for all sorts of practical reasons.

However, right now, I'm off to drop into a chat room – while I still can.



TIM RICHARDSON
WEB WATCHER

If flaming a spammer still fails, lobby your MP

What have a wig-maker, a Russian Web company, an e-commerce outfit offering cheap fags and a get-rich-quick scheme all got in common? No, they're not the latest ISPs to offer unmetered access to the Net. Instead, they've all invaded my inbox as part of a stream of unsolicited – and unwanted – emails.

Spam is a curse but it's part of the territory for anyone who uses the Net. It's not just the hassle of having to deal with the stuff, it also takes up valuable bandwidth which congests the Net, making everything slower. It's as if the Web has sinus troubles and is constantly battling against a bunged-up nose.

So how do you deal with it? Well, I'm not a physician, so if you've got sinus troubles go see a doctor.

If it's spam, then one way to deal with it is to lobby politicians. This might sound dull but there are new laws being looked at in Europe that would, in effect, legalise spam. Who knows, there may still be time to change their minds but, if not, who else can you turn to?

'Reply by dumping a big, useless file on their Web server'

Well, one Net company in London takes junk email so seriously it will take spammers to court if they don't pack it in. Fulham-based BiblioTech has chased one US spammer – Sam Khuri, of Benchmark Printing – through the courts since 1998. They've won a ruling that if he does it again, he has to pay $1,000 plus costs to every single person he spams. Hats off to BiblioTech for being so persistent, but you have to wonder if it will have any real effect on this global business.

If all else fails, you could always take the advice of Internet hardware company, Cisco Systems, which told us all – by mistake – its own form of spam-busting retribution. In its publication *The Easy Guide to Network Security*, which Cisco has now ditched, the company said: 'Spam is usually harmless, but it can be a nuisance, taking up time and storage space. The solution is to flame the perpetrators by sending them abusive messages, or to reply by dumping a very large and useless file on their Web server.'

It's perfectly useless advice. The only thing it might do is make you feel better. So here goes. 'Dear Mr Wig-Maker, why don't just stick your syrups...'

PICTURES: BBC

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THE BEST, THE WORST AND THE DAFTEST STUFF ON THE WEB

HEROES & ZEROS

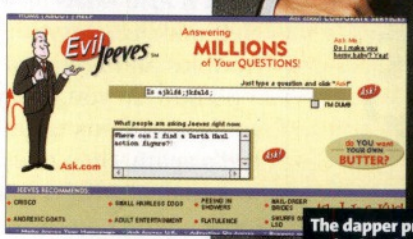
BEST PARODY

GOOD BUTLER, BAD BUTLER

Some would say that the answers given by Ask Jeeves are a bit of a joke anyway, but if you fancy having some additional fun with the Web butler then point your browser at Evil Jeeves. When you search for something your request goes through to the 'real' Jeeves, but take time to read this mickey-taking page first.

Evil Jeeves recommends, among other things, peeing in showers, mail order brides and Smurfs on LSD. And the questions asked of Evil Jeeves include 'What colour does a Smurf's face turn when you choke it?' and 'Does the freedom of speech not apply to those under 18?' Worth a look.

members.tripod.com/~EvilMonkey/eviljeeves

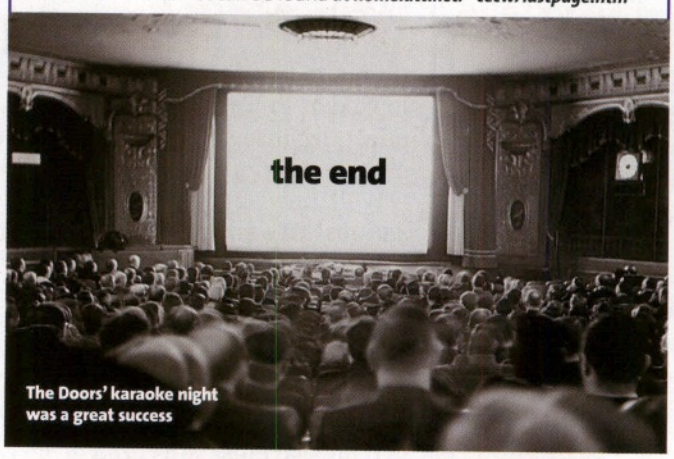


The dapper protestors waited patiently for the flags to catch fire

MOST POINTLESS PAGE

THE END OF THE ROAD

SO YOU THOUGHT the Internet would never end, that the World Wide Web went round and round in circles in a recurring loop. Well, you were wrong – the end of the Internet can be found at ***home.att.net/~cecw/lastpage.htm***



The Doors' karaoke night was a great success

MOST BIZARRE

WARNING: DON'T DRINK AND SURF

You know what it's like – you have a couple of bevvies, then decide it would be great to nip onto the Net for an hour or two. You know you've had a few, but what the hell...

OK, so it's safer to go online when drunk than it is to drive, but should you really be let loose on the Net under the influence of alcohol? Luckily, there's a measure of whether to stay online or not: the Drunk Browsing Test. Are you sober enough to surf? Check it out.

www.turnpike.net/%7Emirsky/drunk

'...but I didn't inhale'

BEST TIMEWASTER The Greatest Dancer

LET'S FACE IT, the 70s were fun. Big afro haircuts, disco music to die for, flares to trip over and collars that could poke someone's eye out at twenty paces. If you want to relive those crazy dancefloor antics without leaving the comfort and safety of your own home, let this Shockwave game fulfil your pleasures. Get down to the music and direct your dancing groover to replicate the move of his partner. Manage to copy all the moves correctly and you'll be able to watch him go wild. Great fun.

www.peoplesound.com/games/game_1.htm

'Tractor beam activated, captain'

PICTURES: RETNA, IMAGEBANK

are you sure you know all the do's and don'ts of getting married?

planning tools

Is it acceptable to marry in red?

Can a woman be best man? Getting married raises so many questions and issues. Don't worry. Here at confetti we know all about wedding etiquette. We call it confettiquette and you can find it in our section on advice and ideas. Our very own Agony Aunt – Betti@confetti – is there to individually reply to any extra tricky questions you may have. And you can also share your problems and ideas with other couples on our message boards. Furthermore, when you register with us, as well as receiving a free copy of our booklet 'Weddings Made Simple' you could win £10,000 towards your dream wedding. Which really is good form.

confetti.co.uk

weddings made simple.

The dotcom millionaires finally reached legal drinking age

NET COSTS

Universities challenged by charges

British colleges face huge phone bills generated by surfing 'students'

If you're desperately trying to get connected to a completely free ISP in an effort to cut your ever-spiralling online phone bill, spare a thought for universities.

As we all know, university students are indeed a bunch of lazy, good-for-nothing layabouts (before anyone complains, I've been there), who have got nothing better to do with their time than using the Net to email their mates and look for porn. Now it seems that the bill for personal use of the Net by students and staff could leave UK universities with a yearly loss of £450,000. Oxford and Cambridge between them are set to lose £40,000.

Net use could leave UK unis with a bill of £450K

If you're facing the dilemma of choosing between offers from both of Britain's premier educational establishments, it's worth noting that Oxford permits recreational use of the computer network, while Cambridge passes the costs onto colleges and imposes 'moral pressure' on students to be sensible.

NEW KIT

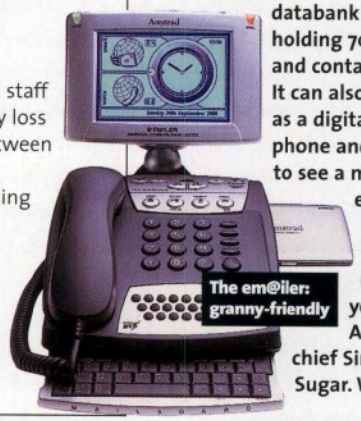
12P TO SEND AN EMAIL? GET AWAY!

Amstrad is aiming to take email to the masses with the launch of a telephone-based system, em@iler. Lauded as the 'product of the century', it has been developed in collaboration with BT and allows you to send and receive email without a PC.

The em@iler is being sold at a subsidised price of £79.99, which we have to admit is pretty cheap. However, users have to pay 12p to send an email – which isn't cheap. Additionally, you pay 12p per email session, although this does allow you to receive as many emails as you like. Amstrad gets its money from email usage and from revenue routed through to the units via its Amserve ISP service, which users need to sign up to.

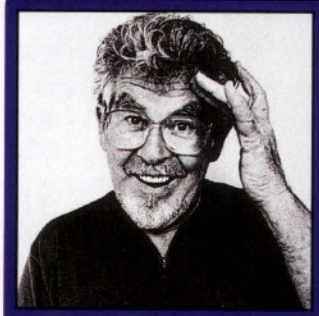
Sugar predicts it'll have a million users in two years

The product, a tad clunkier looking than its hi-tech hype would have had you believe, comprises a phone, backlit LCD screen, keyboard and portable databank capable of holding 700 names and contact details. It can also be used as a digital answer-phone and fax. 'I plan to see a million e-m@ailers in Britain within the next two years,' said Amstrad chief Sir Alan Sugar. We'll see.



The em@iler: granny-friendly

SPOKEN WORD



LOOK WHO'S TALKING...

Top quotes from recent celebrity Web chats

'I think Posh and Becks are the best couple around... fantastic couple.'
LOUISE FROM PRECIOUS PROVES THAT SHE'S GOT SUCH BAD TASTE SHE'S BOUND TO MAKE IT IN THE POP INDUSTRY AT ***www.chat.beeb.com***

'There's invariably one transvestite with a friend at the front.'
MARK FROM MOLOKO DESCRIBING THE TYPE OF FANS THE BAND GET AT THEIR GIGS

Precious: all teeth

'I refuse to change my looks or get my kit off.'
HOLBY CITY'S ANGELA GRIFFIN REVEALS A SURPRISING TRAIT FOR AMBITIOUS GIRLS, ON AOL

'I was on the toilet when Steve wrote it, but it sounded great.'
DAMON FROM OCEAN COLOUR SCENE TALKS ABOUT THAT GUITAR RIFF ON THE RIVERBOAT SON ON AOL

'On this new one, I'm doing Robbie Williams' *Angels*.'
ROLF HARRIS REVEALS PLANS FOR HIS NEW ALBUM MAKING THE BOY WILLIAMS QUIVER IN FEAR, ON AOL

Griffin: kit on, thank you

'Hey dude, there's that Blair Witch!'

Net Charts

5

THE WEB'S FAVOURITES

TOP 10 MOST BOUGHT ITEMS ON THE NET

Book:
The Naked Chef – Jamie Oliver
CD:
Supernatural – Santana
Video:
Star Wars: Episode 1 – The Phantom Menace
Computer game:
F1 2000 for PlayStation
DVD:
South Park – Bigger, Longer & Uncut
Furniture:
Corner Computer Work Desk
Computer equipment: iMac
Electrical goods: MP3 player
Household appliance:
Daewoo Microwave
Chocolates:
Charbonnel et Walker
ipoints.co.uk

Oliver: love the shirt

TOP 5 SITES IN THE UK

1 Yahoo.com
2 Freeserve.com
3 Hotmail.com
4 Msn.com
5 Yahoo.co.uk

NetValue

AMAZON.CO.UK'S BEST-SELLING BOOKS

1 **Return of the Naked Chef** Jamie Oliver
2 **The Consolations of Philosophy** Alain de Botton
3 **The Naked Chef** Jamie Oliver
4 **Chocolat** Joanne Harris
5 **Harry Potter 4** J.K. Rowling

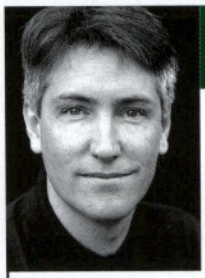
TOP 5 ECOMMERCE SITES IN THE UK

1 ***Amazon.co.uk***
2 ***Lastminute.com***
3 ***Amazon.com***
4 ***Jungle.com***
5 ***Bonzi.com***

NetValue

Cartman: the fourth tenor?

Ocean Colour Scene: lavatorial



JON CASIMIR

WORLD SURFING CHAMPION

The Net's not like going for a beer – a survey says

Another week, another Net survey. Are there now more people – scientists, researchers, academics, marketers – studying the Net than those actually using it? Hardly a day goes by without a new brace of theories, most variations on a recurring theme: just how bad is the Internet for us?

A month ago, a Stanford University report claimed a wave of Net-induced social isolation was sweeping across America, forcing people to spend less time with their friends and, heaven forbid, less time shopping. Every time I see this kind of news story, I find myself asking not whether it's true, but why there's such an obsession with whether or not the Net is evil. Why are so many parties invested in the idea that the Internet is an anti-social force?

And is the question itself more revealing than the answer? Is it just an extension of our techno fear, with the Frankenstein Complex (the idea that our machines will enslave us) at its root, directed at the latest, and most alien, expression of technology?

So is the Net an anti-social invention? Well, is television an anti-social device? We tend to watch it in groups, but it doesn't stop us talking. Or does it? It may kill conversation at the time of viewing, but many of us talk later about what we have seen, at school, at work, at home. TV is part of our shared reality.

Is the phone an anti-social device? What if it brings us closer by

Net-induced social isolation was forcing people to shop less

allowing us to maintain closer relationships across greater geographical areas? What if telephone answering machines allow us to take care of lesser relationships more efficiently, leaving more time for ones that really count?

And looking at the question from the other side, what's so good about face-to-face communication anyway? Why do all the people behind the surveys seem to think it's so preferable to technology-mediated communication? Why must we reduce the concept of human connection to the physical presence? That seems a notion that was seriously outdated long before the Net arrived.

One commentator recently said that surfing the Net with friends is 'not a social activity, like going for a beer'. Really? Who's to say the quality of pub conversation is higher or of more emotional value than that available online?

Is the Net an anti-social force? Well, sorry for writing a column with so many question marks, but does anybody really think the equation is that simple?

PICTURES: RETNA, KOBAL COLLECTION

Samsung MP3 Player
High Street price £189.89
intersaver £119.66

Philips DVD Player
High Street price £249.99
intersaver £173.91

Sharp Micro Hi-Fi
High Street Price £279.99
intersaver £223.51

Bosch Washer Dryer
High Street price £849.87
intersaver £726.24

Zanussi Gas Cooker
High Street price £849.99
intersaver £647.67

Toshiba Digital Camera
High Street price £499.99
intersaver £417.99

Daewoo Large Screen TV
High Street price £299.99
intersaver £221.07

Hoover Vacuum Cleaner
High Street price £98.95
intersaver £74.24

"The first time I did it was with my sister's boyfriend..."

...We met down the pub and, after a couple of drinks, he suggested I went back to his place.
To 'have a go' was how he put it.
When we got there, he led me straight upstairs. I knew he'd done it before because my sister had told me, but I was surprised how easy it was, we clicked immediately.
My sister knew what I'd been up to the minute I got home. Shame really. I didn't want her to know I'd saved £200 on her wedding present, online at intersaver.

intersaver.co.uk

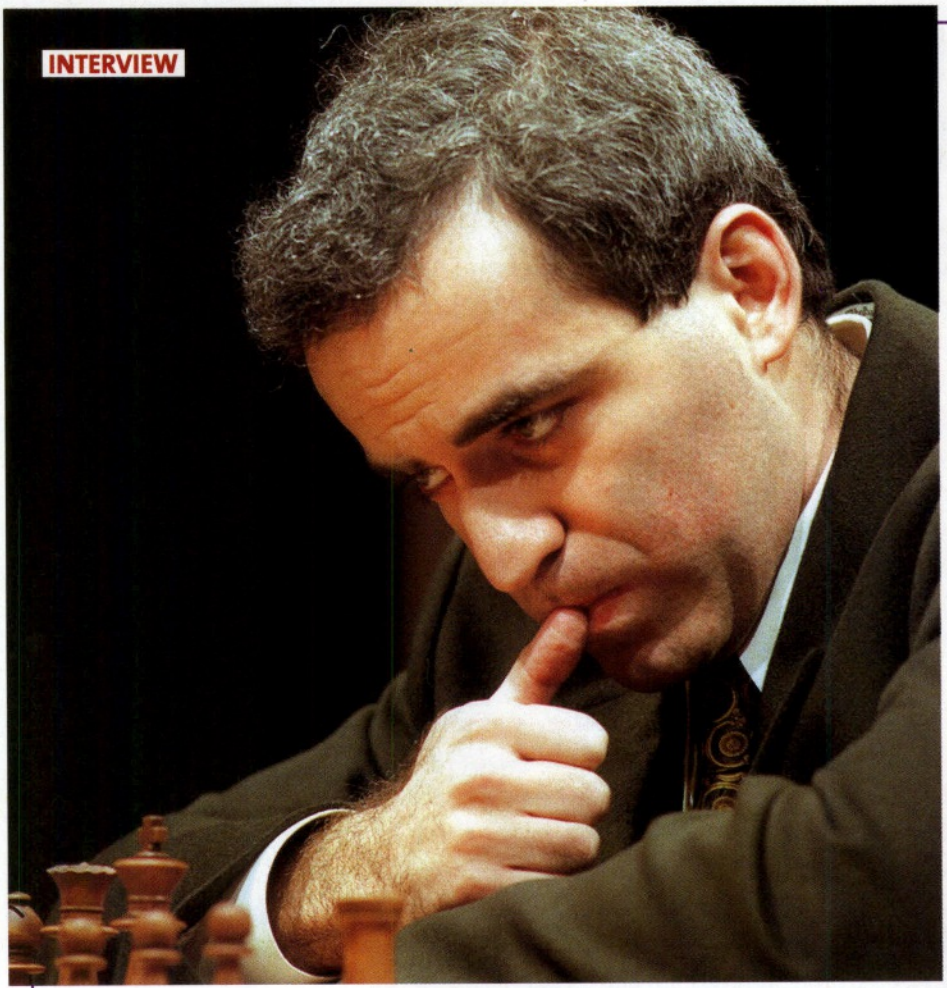
are you e-xperienced?

www.intersaver.co.uk

0870 750 6565

Tell us about 'your first time' at www.intersaver.co.uk and enter our prize draw to win a Sharp Internet ViewCam.

Prices correct at time of going to press.



INTERVIEW

Kasparov: Net-mate

The greatest-ever chess player on the Internet's effect on world power, and how the Web will make his sport as popular as football

GARRY KASPAROV IS A PHENOMENON. AT 22 HE was the youngest-ever world chess champion, knocking Communist lackey Anatoly Karpov off the top spot in 1985. He's held that title for 15 years and now, age 37, speeds around the world giving speeches, writing articles on everything from computers to politics, promoting his online company – and playing endless games of chess.

When did you first use the Internet?

I took my first steps online in 1996, when I started using email. The next year I was in discussions with IBM about creating a Web site, which came to nothing; but that led to the idea of creating a site for my fans called Club Kasparov. Since then the Net has become an integral part of my world. When I travel, for example, I always get news about Russia online. Only once have I been in a country where I couldn't log on to one of my ISPs.

Which God-forsaken, backward place was that?

Iceland. I had to call Newfoundland before I could get online.

As a chess player, you must find the Web an invaluable resource...

It's changed the whole dynamics of the game. Twenty years ago, information about moves and technique wasn't easy to find, especially in the Communist block. Today you just log on.

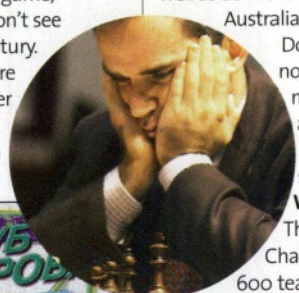
Do you ever surf for fun?

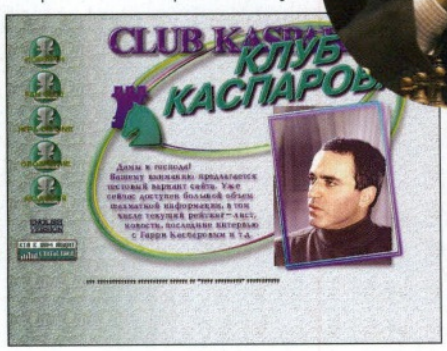
No, I don't have time to waste. I always surf with a sense of purpose.

Your May 1997 rematch against IBM'S Deep Blue computer was Webcast in real time. Deep Blue won 3.5 to 2.5. Are computers our superiors forever?

No. Until machines win every single game, humankind is still in the contest. I don't see that happening for another half century.

As for that tournament, there were all sorts of glaring anomalies. Neither I – nor any independent adjudicator – was allowed to see printouts from Deep Blue. The computer actually crashed three times, but IBM said they had been 'programmed halts'. One of those halts really threw my game. It left quite a nasty taste.





If I get the chance to play another computer in a similar bout, I'll insist that there are independent human adjudicators and that the machine shouldn't have any assistance. And, last but not least, if it crashes, it should forfeit the game.

It sounds like you'd be up for a third match against Deep Blue. Would you stake your title as World Champion on the result?

Yes. I would only play such a match on the condition that winner takes all.

***Newsweek* described your match against Deep Blue as 'the brain's last stand'. What's it like to represent the hopes of an entire species?**

I wish I could do it again. I know that machines are not yet ready to beat us.

You're very interested in politics, and were involved in the struggle for independence in the former Soviet republic of Azerbaijan. What's the role of the Web in social rebellion and control?

Rules that have applied for centuries regarding the state as an organisation that controls people's lives are being abolished. Key information is no longer being withheld from the people – it's available over the Web. The state, as we know it, is losing its sense of purpose, and therefore its control.

'We are the very best in the online chess field'

You're in the UK to support a British company called the Brain Games Network. Why is that?

Brain Games is organising as well as finding the $2m prize money for a brand-new World Chess Championship, scheduled to take place in London in October. It will be my first defence of the title for five years. My opponent is a former pupil of mine and the world number two, Vladimir Kramnik. If all goes to plan, it will be transmitted over the Web.

Tell us about ChessKasparov.com...

I pride myself that we are the very best in the online chess field. It's a place where chess fans, clubs and organisations can have a sense of unity.

Chess can be of huge benefit for children. It helps them to concentrate, learn, and enjoy non-violent competition. When we launched I simultaneously played – with the help of the Net – ten kids in a TV studio in Times Square, New York, as well as 20 more from other countries – from Australia to Israel.

Don't think that the site means nothing but Garry Kasparov. It's merely a trademark, which has, and I hope this doesn't sound immodest, the name of the most successful player ever.

What's the site's next big project?

The ABC World School Chess Championships. We've got more than 600 teams and 2000 children from all over the world playing chess, via the Internet. By September we could have more than 10,000 schools participating – this goes a long way to bearing out what I have always suspected: after soccer, chess is the world's most popular sport!

Club Kasparov is at ***www.clubkasparov.ru***
KasparovChess is at ***www.kasparovchess.com***
E-mail Garry at ***kasparov@totalchess.ru***

WORDS: JONATHAN WEBSTER

"I like the really graphic stuff."

"TotalServe blew me away, and I thought I'd seen everything. The audio's top too... I've never seen a package like it and I am nearly 80 you know..."
Mrs Enid Braithwaite, Kent.

If TotalServe can make Mrs Braithwaite feel like an excited young fawn, just think what it could do for you.

Goes like the clappers.
Other ISPs are slow, sluggish and downright backward in comparison. TotalServe gives you fast connection, time after time – and no engaged signals to irritate your inner ear.

So broad-minded.
TotalServe has the most in-depth service available today. Together with constantly updated news, weather, business and sport, there's also a jumbo, extra value package containing Food & Drink, Entertainment, Education, Motoring, Travel and Lifestyle sections...

No other ISP gives you gifts like these.
Our TIPS™ scheme regularly gives you the chance to win quality gifts and services, simply for staying loyal to TotalServe. You automatically earn TIPS™ by using our service.

All the extras...
Include free web e-mail, free access and communication, web building help, quality games, chat rooms and a comprehensive and easily understandable Internet Guide. For a more rewarding experience, join Mrs Braithwaite and TotalServe.

www.totalserve.com

TIPS™ applied for. TotalServe is part of the Powernet Telecom Group, with the following industry partners. ORACLE Cisco Powered Network Sun microsystems

GAME ON

Whether you're a hardcore gamer or a newbie, our cover CD will give you one of the best online gaming experiences ever

Open up our cover CD-ROM and within minutes you could be gaming for your life – online. In case you didn't know it, the technology needed to play someone on the other side of the planet now exists and this month's free CD-ROM forms the perfect introduction to the world of online gaming.

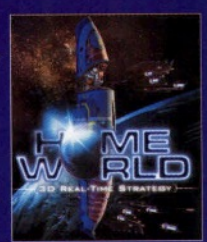
In association with Won.Net, the top online gaming site, we're giving away exclusive playable demos of three of the most formidable online games around: Homeworld, SWAT3 and Soldier of Fortune. In addition, the CD-ROM will connect you direct to the WON.net Web site at *www.won.net* so you can pit your wits with an online opponent anywhere in the world in one of the other 30 multiplayer games on the CD, which include bridge, backgammon, chess, checkers, dominoes and many other favourites.

So, what are you waiting for? Follow the loading instructions in the panel below and get online today for the game of your life!

thenet
FREE GAMES!
SWAT 3
CLOSE QUARTERS BATTLE
Three exclusive playable demos: Homeworld, SWAT3 and Soldier of Fortune
In association with
+30 OF THE BEST ONLINE MULTIPLAYER GAMES!

WHAT'S ON THE DISC

This CD contains fully playable demos of Homeworld, SWAT3 and Soldier of Fortune, plus your ticket to over 30 online games, including:



QUICK GAMES
Absolute Zero, Roach Invaders, Snowcraft

ONLINE WORD GAMES
Wordox, Acrophobia

ONLINE CARD GAMES
Bridge, Hearts, Gin Rummy, Pinochle, Spades, Euchre, Cribbage

ONLINE BOARD GAMES
Backgammon, Checkers, Chess, Dominoes, Pachisi, Reversi, Yacht

ONLINE CASINO GAMES
Blackjack, Poker, Roulette

TO GET STARTED: 1. Insert the CD into your PC. 2. If you have Windows 95 or above the CD should start automatically. If not, double-click on the CD drive icon in the 'My Computer' folder. 3. If you have any problems with your CD, e-mail us at cdfeedback@uk.won.net or write to us at the address below.

MINIMUM SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Windows 95/98/NT 4.0 (w/service pack 4.0), Pentium II 233 processor, 32Mb RAM, 80Mb HD space (+ 50Mb permanent swap file), 4xCD-ROM drive, 4Mb PCI Video Card (16-bit colour, DirectX compatible), 16-bit DirectX compatible soundcard, Windows compatible mouse, DirectX 6.1.

If disk is faulty return to: *the net*, 38-42 Hampton Rd, Teddington, Middx TW11 0JE.

This disk has been thoroughly scanned and checked throughout production, but it is still advisable to run a virus checker.

Haymarket Publishing and WON.net accept no responsibility for any damage or loss of data from your computer whilst using this CD or the data on it.

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dayslikethese

YOUR MONTH ON THE WEB

'Y.M.C.A...'

20 A load of old balls

SAT

FA Cup final, Wembley, May 20

OK, so there's the Champions League and the mouth-watering prospect of Euro 2000 still to come, but the Cup Final remains the one match no football fan should miss. This year's clash promises to be particularly intriguing, as a resurgent Chelsea take on the hard graft of an inconsistent Villa. Add to the mix the fact that this will be the last Final in Wembley Stadium As We Know It, and you'll realise that you'd have to be mad to miss out. ***www.football365.com***

DEAR DIARY

MAY 10 WEDNESDAY — 53rd Cannes Film Festival
www.festival-cannes.fr
Birthday: Bono, 40
www.theuzzone.com

11 THUR — Queen opens the Tate Modern
www.tate.org.uk
Birthday: Emilio Estevez, 38
www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Academy/5031

12 FRI — Ian Dury born in 1942
www.iandury.co.uk

13 SAT — Miss Universe Final
www.geocities.com/TelevisionCity/Studio/7955
Birthday: Harvey Keitel, 61
mrshowbiz.go.com/people/harveykeitel

14 SUN — British Academy Television Awards
www.bafta.org
Birthday: Martine McCutcheon, 24
www.martinemccutcheon.com

20 SAT — Birthday: Cher, 54
www.geocities.com/Broadway/4662/index.html

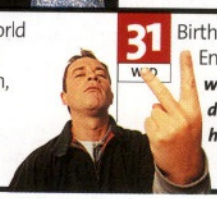
21 SUN — European Grand Prix, Nurburgring
formula1.com
Birthday: Leo Sayer, 52
www.wesjen.simplenet.com/sayer/leosayer.htm

22 MON — Birthday: Naomi Campbell, 30
web.tin.it/mirror/naomi/nc.html
Birthday: Morrissey, 41
www.morrissey-solo.com

Notorious BIG born in 1972
www.geocities.com/Baja/1267
Birthday: Graeme Hick, 34 ***www.cricket.org***

24 WED — Champions League Final
www.uefa.com/UCL
Birthday: Bob Dylan, 59
www.bobdylan.com

30 TUES — The 7th World Animation Celebration, Hollywood
www.wacfest.com



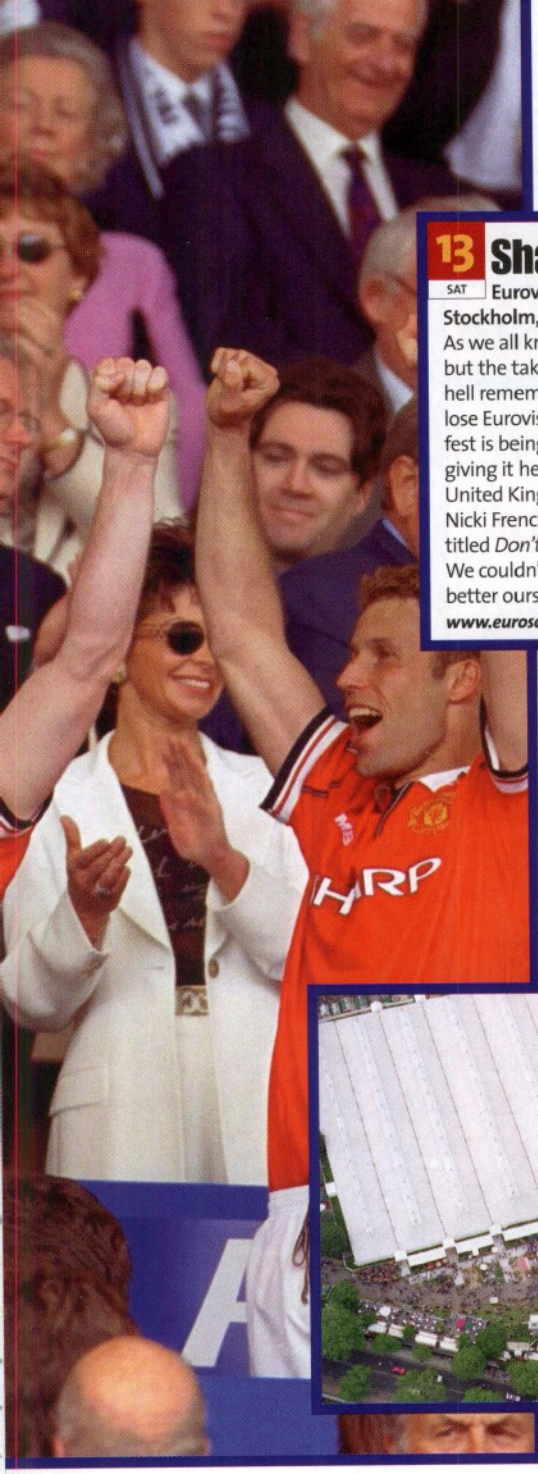
31 WED — Birthday: Harry Enfield, 39
www.homefront.demon.co.uk/henf/harry.htm

JUNE 1 THUR — Birthday: Jason Donovan, 32
homepages.go.com/homepages/s/a/b/sabrina_hoornaert/jason-donovan.htm

2 FRI — *House of Mirth* released
www.gillian-anderson.co.uk
Birthday: Tony Hadley, 40
www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Palladium/7994

3 SAT — Birthday: Suzi Quatro, 50
www.ozemail.com.au/~suziq
Curtis Mayfield born in 1942
curtismayfield.cjb.net

WORDS: SARAH WAKELY; PICTURES: ACTION IMAGES, CORBIS PA, RETNA



13 SAT Sha-la-la-la

Eurovision Song Contest, Stockholm, May 13

As we all know, it's not the winning but the taking part – but who the hell remembers the songs that lose Eurovision? This year's kitsch-fest is being held in Stockholm; giving it her absolute all for the United Kingdom will be the lovely Nicki French, warbling the aptly-titled *Don't Play That Song Again*. We couldn't have said it any better ourselves.

www.eurosong2000.com

Not content with changing sex, Dana International attempted to alter species

23 TUE Blooming wonderful

Chelsea Flower Show, London, 23-26 May

It's now impossible to turn on the telly without coming across a horticultural transformation programme – or the irritatingly omnipresent Charlie Dimmock for that matter. So it's not surprising that this year's Chelsea Flower Show has also hit the Web with a vengeance; Spider Garden (***www.spidergarden.com***), for example, are attempting to become the first 'Show Garden to be designed and completed by a dotcom' with their Zen-inspired effort. Brings a whole new meaning to the growth of the Internet...

www.rhs.org.uk

IKEA was a nightmare at weekends

15 MON Birthday: Brian Eno, 52 ***www.hyperreal.org/music/artists/brian_eno***

Birthday: Mike Oldfield, 47 ***www.mikeoldfield.org***

Birthday: Pierce Brosnan, 47 ***members.aol.com/mrhsfan/pierce.htm***

17 WED UEFA Cup Final ***euro.futbal.org/9900/uefacup.html***

Birthday: Andrea Corr, 26 ***www.corrs.com***

18 THUR Birthday: Toyah, 42 ***www.lost-city.demon.co.uk***

Michael Jackson and Lisa Marie Presley married in 1994 ***www.mjnet.com***

19 FRI Birthday: Pete Townshend, 55 ***www.petetownshend.co.uk***

Malcolm X born in 1925 ***www.brothermalcolm.net***

25 THUR Birthday: Lauryn Hill, 25 ***www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/Square/1352***

26 FRI *28 Days* is released ***www.sony.com/28days***

Birthday: Patsy Palmer, 28 ***www.madabouteastenders.com***

27 SAT Scottish FA Cup Final ***www.scotprem.com***

Birthday: Lisa 'Left Eye' Lopez, 29 ***www.tlcfanmail.com***

28 SUN Birthday: Kylie Minogue, 32 ***www.kylie.com***

Birthday: David Baddiel, 36 ***www.comedyweb.co.uk***

29 MON Tennis – French Open ***www.tennis.org.uk***

Birthday: Melissa Etheridge, 39 ***drchuck.net/melissa***

4 SUN Isle of Man TT races begin ***www.iomtt.com***

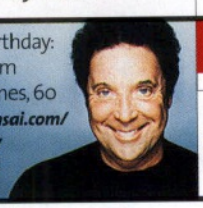
Monaco Grand Prix ***www.itv-f1.com***

5 MON Birthday: Mark Wahlberg, 29 ***www.MarkWahlberg.com***

6 TUES Birthday: Bjorn Borg, 44 ***www.tennis.org.uk***

Birthday: The Artist, 42 ***come.to/dawnation***

7 WED Birthday: Tom Jones, 60 ***www.kensai.com/personal/tomjones***



8 THUR Birthday: Mick Hucknall, 40 ***www.simplyred.co.uk***

Birthday: Bonnie Tyler, 49 ***mir.glas.apc.org/~evm/bonnie***

topukwebsites.com

Computers & Gadgets

capital.uk.com

Capital technology brings you the best in computers, software and accessories for both home and corporate solutions. From custom built PC's, built to your requirements to laptops, scanners and playstations, Capital Technology is the ultimate home and office PC centre.

firebox.com

Firebox.com is the place to get all the latest gadgets, boys toys and stuff you can't live without. Where else could you find remote controlled motor bikes, MP3 watches, million pound puzzles and powerboats?

carphonewarehouse.com

An easy to use and cleverly designed website. Lets you search products according to different criteria such as tariff, network and phone type. Offering special Deals every single day not found on any other website.

21store.com

21store.com has forged its position as a leading e-tailer of digital products. We provide brands like JVC, Casio, Garmin, Fuji and many more, at competitive prices and with unsurpassed customer support. We know digital.

House & Home

qvcuk.com

The online department store. Over 8,000 products in fashion, jewellery, home and garden, electrical, health and beauty and collectables and gifts, plus special offers and information about its parent, QVC The Shopping Channel.

maelstrom.co.uk

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dvdworld.co.uk

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jungle.com

jungle.com is the UK's leading online computer and entertainment superstore offering all you could want for your PC plus CDs, games and video at the lowest prices online. Buying from jungle.com is simple and secure and its speedy delivery service is FREE for all products.

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chocexpress.com

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rac.co.uk

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Visit the RAC site today and find all the latest motoring news, views and information, as well as an exclusive offer on RAC membership. Find the latest RAC Traffic News and the unique RAC Route Planner online.

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Dear thenet,

I've been trying a few different ISPs recently, but even though I've finished with a couple of them, I can't seem to get rid of them. When I open my email software, it defaults to the wrong ISP, messing up my incoming email. Can you tell me how I lay the ghosts to rest?

Steve Hobson, Birmingham
Stevie678@hotmail.com

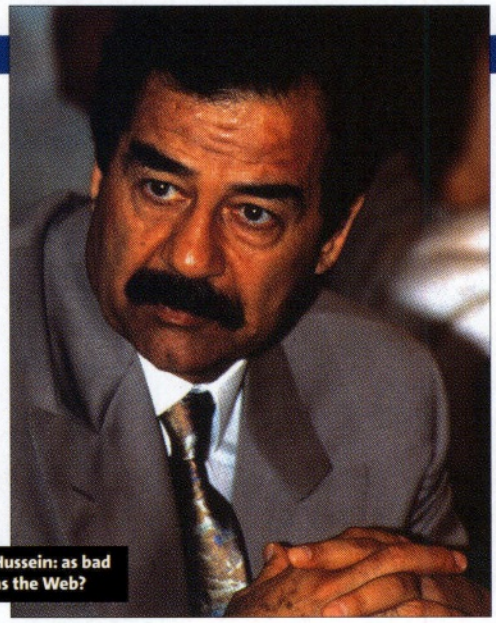
You need to go into whichever email program you're using, enter Options or Preferences and change the address of your incoming and outgoing mail servers, plus your user name and password. Your ISP should have supplied you with all these details when you joined up, and changing the default settings will ensure you get straight to the mail service you want. If you don't know all of your details, see your ISP's site.

Dear thenet,

I know that AOL gives out CDs like the rest of us give out CO_2, but why is it that every three or four times I turn on my PC I get asked, via a big ugly grey box, whether I'm interested in AOL Instant Messenger? I've tried searching my hard drive for the program it asks for but, last time, it came up I hit 'No' so hard I nearly knackered my mouse. What gives?

Rik Marley, Lostock
via email

Unfortunately, such pop-up boxes are one of the regrettable consequences of signing up with certain ISPs or downloading certain programs. So, short of changing your ISP, there's not a lot you can do about it.



Hussein: as bad as the Web?

READER'S LETTER OF THE MONTH

Dear thenet,

The Internet has both good and bad aspects. I believe people deserve to know the bad side of this new technology. The Internet is mind-controlling and tends to possess the unsuspecting individual by the pictures on the screen and the words in the chat room. This includes photos of everything from women/men showing personal body parts to pictures of furniture performing sexual activity. Now, the new superior brain machines have added another great link to their mechanical bodies – a tool to help individuals have sexual contact over the Net.

I have many more ideas that I must share with the public. One example is the percentage of Net users who have problems turning the computer off at night, forcing individuals to sacrifice their family life as well as their careers.

Krystal McCallister
Iowa, US

We must have missed the 'furniture performing sexual activity', but do keep those ideas coming... No, really.

Dear thenet,

Nice to see Courteney Cox on the cover of the last issue. Funnily enough, I did try to email her and, rather unsurprisingly, got no response. Could this be anything to do with the fact that she was too busy counting all the money she's going to earn from the new season of *Friends*? I hear the stars are getting $1 million each for every show. I think I could be anyone's friend for that kind of money. It's just nice to see that the TV company is getting value out of them by providing a good official site at ***friends.warnerbros.com***. Every *Friends* fan should have it bookmarked.

James Chadaband
via email

MAIL MONKEY Now you're stalking

From: **mailmonkey@chimp.co.uk**
Sent: Wednesday April 19, 2000
To: sara.cox@radio1.co.uk
Subject: Morning

Dear Sara,

I know you requested that I didn't make contact with you again, in any form, ever since the last time we bumped into each other, but I really felt then that the time was ripe to bury the hatchet. As I pointed out at the time, it's amazing how an innocent observation about a person's surname can be so horrendously misconstrued. Fortunately, the magistrates saw my point of view. Eventually.

Anyway, I must say I'm not at all impressed with all this getting-up-early-in-the-morning-to-present-a-radio-show nonsense you've been banging on about recently. As I was telling my old chum DLT when he popped round for a banana the other day, it's not exactly rocket science, is it? Chuck on a few records and witter a bit, then go home with a truckload of cash. Some of us get up early for a morning recreational round the park every day and what do we get by dint of thanks? An injunction.

And, having heard your show of a morning, I must say it's not worth getting up for anyway. You badly need a gimmick to put you ahead of the competition. That's where I can help – I might just have the idea for you. You must have seen the popular TV quiz, *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*. Well, how about giving it a subtle twist for the *Breakfast Show*? I'm thinking, *Who Wants To Win A Monkey's Hair*?, in which lucky punters could win the fur from a willing primate. It's cheap and, at the rate I moult, you'd never run out of prizes. I realise previous ideas along these lines have resulted in custodial sentences, but this one's a sure-fire hit. If you don't do it, you know Evans will.

If I don't hear back from you soon, I'll drop in for a friendly natter in a few days' time.

Look forward to working together,

Mail monkey

www.bbc.co.uk/radio 1

www.phone-a-friend.com

www.zoeball.net

www.shavethis.com

Dear thenet,

I enjoyed your feature on emailing celebrities. While most of the addresses that I tried from your list did work, I've yet to receive any replies from celebrities. Is there any way I can try to increase my chances of hearing back?

Chris Jones
Swansea

You've got to bear in mind the sheer volume of mail most celebrities with publicly-listed email addresses receive. Often they'll simply shut the account if they're deluged, or just not bother writing back. The good news is that stars from all walks of fame are setting up official sites to boost profiles, and your chances of getting a reply are much greater if you use the email facility there. Keep trying...

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PICTURE: LIAISON

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Europe's largest guide to shopping on the net.
ShopsOnTheNet.com

Featuring an up-to-the-minute, geek-free Internet news service from your favourite Net magazine. We'll keep you informed of all the latest ISP and Web news as it breaks!

THE NET NOW

NET NEWS, FUN STUFF AND OPINION

www.thenetnow.co.uk

WHAT'S INSIDE THE NET NOW?

NET NEWS

All the latest Internet news updated every day: we'll bring you the latest sites, news of who's Webcasting and Webchatting where and when – plus all that's happening in the world of the Net.

FUN STUFF

Need something to pass the time? Bored at work and looking for some light relief? Check out our email attachment of the day, offering you the loudest laugh in cyberspace.

SOFTWARE CENTRE

We'll show you where to find the best software available. Whether it's for work or play, we've searched out all of the essential software to make your life online more enjoyable.

WHAT WEBSITE?

There's a huge number of Web addresses in *the net* each month, but don't panic: we've archived every site we've ever featured!

thenetnow
BRINGING THE BEST OF THE WEB TO YOUR BROWSER
Home
Net news
Opinion
Fun stuff
Best of the Web
What Website?
Help section
Software centre
In the mag
Subscriptions
Competitions
BEST OF THE WEB
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Pos. Name Votes
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2 Yahoo 1234
3 Liberal Democrats 543
4 LastMinute.com 72
5 Amazon.co.uk 32
SITE OF THE WEEK
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BEST OF THE WEB

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HELP SECTION

Don't know your FTP from your HTML? We've got loads of Net advice on our site, and – praise be! – it's all written in plain English.

BAT TO THE FUTURE

No11 CRICINFO
www.cricinfo.com

Every so often there comes along a brand that becomes so utterly synonymous with the market it serves that the distinction between the two disappears. Beenz, despite the best efforts of Web marketeers, will continue to mean Heinz. Cornflakes will always be Kellogg's. And there'll never be any such thing as Internet cricket – there'll only be CricInfo.

A whopping seven years old this summer, CricInfo has sewn up interactive cricket so effectively that the mere idea of competing is patently ludicrous; as chief executive Simon King admits, 'You just can't. The barrier to competition is going up all the time.' The site's statistics make terrifying reading for potential rivals: CricInfo is the biggest single-sport site in the world, reaching 180 different countries and dominating the cricket market in each of them. In Australia and India, it's the biggest content site bar none. And of course, it's the current holder of *the net*'s 'Best Sport Site' award.

Such dominance is all the more surprising when you consider the site's origins. In 1993, Hall, 36, was a university academic exiled in Minnesota. He wanted to follow cricket on the then-fledgling Web but found next to nothing to interest him, so he started an IRC chat channel to redress the balance, posting news and scores for users to download. It quickly spawned a Web site, rapidly chalking up a Test score's worth of users every day.

'Within a couple of weeks we knew the demand was going to be massive,' says Hall. 'Within two months we'd brought in management. By mid-1994 it was apparent that we needed to start commercialising it.'

Initially, CricInfo was run by volunteers, including Hall. And although revenue is now met by advertising and licensing, the not-for-profit ethos still pervades the 112-strong organisation: a lot of the money made is given to cricketing authorities or ploughed into the site, with only 'modest' returns for investors. Furthermore, Hall is committed to reporting on the game at every level. 'We cover the whole sport. You can't be authoritative unless you're covering Hampshire Schools *and* Bangladesh first-class cricket.'

It's not grass roots coverage alone which brings in the punters, though – it's the sheer vastness of the operation. CricInfo boasts hundreds of thousands of pages, from straightforward scorecards to an interactive magazine, via a shop, chat, fantasy games, a database of every Test and one-day match ever played and thousands of links. The depth of the information means an unattractive interface, but so impressive is the site's reach that they've built separate homes for dozens of associations around the world.

'Our potential audience is ten to 20 times that of Channel Four'

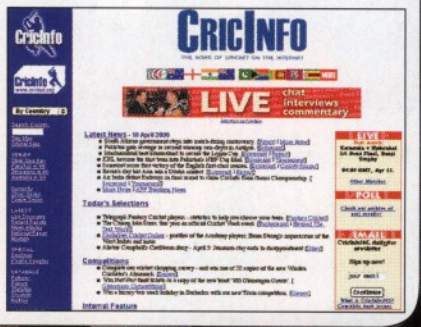
Such is CricInfo's reach that Hall eventually envisages it competing with TV and radio to provide live coverage and subscription-based Real Video streaming straight to desktops. 'Our potential audience is ten to 20 times that of Channel Four.'

All of which makes the site quite a potential money-spinner. Hall values CricInfo at a whopping $250 million – and, even as Internet stocks take a nosedive, you wouldn't bet against the estimate being somewhere near accurate. So why doesn't he sell? 'There have always been offers. People offer us what are basically telephone numbers, but we'd like to build a real media business.'

Still think they don't mean it?

CRICINFO.COM

WHAT IS IT? Anything and everything cricket-related, from scores and player interviews to links and games.
LAUNCHED 1994.
TRAFFIC 95 million page impressions every month, adding up to a *billion* during 1999.
BASE Main office in Chippenham, Wiltshire.
KEY FEATURES Downloadable scorecards, database of historical results, chat rooms, fantasy games and an interactive magazine.



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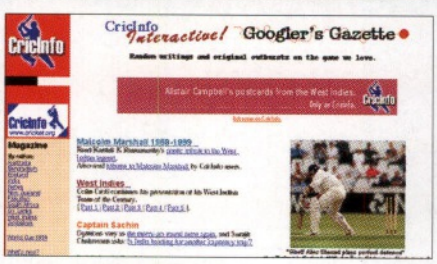

MAGAZINE
Well-written articles on the game, with a separate section featuring further coverage from every major cricket-playing nation. Fully archived and regularly updated.

SHOP
Indulge yourself with a selection of cricketing paraphernalia, such as books, videos and equipment including bats, balls and gloves – all available from the Web site. It will ship anywhere in the world.

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY; PICTURE: STEVE ORINO

One billion not out: Andrew Hall (left) and Simon King

RENTAL WEALTH Cheap DVD hire over the Net

MOVIETRAK

www.movietrak.com

There isn't a High Street in the country without a video rental shop, where piles of the latest releases jostle for position with yesterday's box-office hits. But if DVD rental's your bag, you're restricted to a miserable little stand in Blockbuster. Either that, or shell out £20 for a DVD of your own – a not insignificant wedge, unless you're passionate about the film in question. At least, that was the position before Guy Lawler came on the scene...

As is often the case, Guy's big idea was close to his, and his business partner's, heart. 'We're both big film fans and got into DVD some time ago,' he enthuses. 'But nobody was renting them out online.' Strange, because there's good synergy between DVD and the Net: if you're technical enough to want a DVD player, you're probably on the Internet.

However, just because you're technical doesn't mean you're going to throw 20 notes at any old film slung on a DVD. Some are exemplary, adding new scenes and interactivity, but others can represent a poor upgrade on your old VHS copy. So, at £2.99 for a week's rental, Movietrak lets you try before you buy. Then, if you like what you've seen, you don't have to bung the disc back in its pre-addressed envelope.

'If DVDs don't come back after the rental time, we email a reminder; if people want to keep it longer, they just pay the weekly fee,' explains Guy. 'And once it gets to the retail price, they can keep it.'

Movietrak lets you try before you buy – quite literally in some cases

Why has no one else thought of doing it? They soon will, reckons Guy. 'There are tons of people selling DVDs, but rental's going to be a big growth area. And DVD fits into an envelope well, compared to a videotape.'

Movietrak is set to expand as business increases, both in staff levels – 'there are a lot of envelopes to stuff' – and scope. 'There's going to come a time when streaming will be feasible,' forecasts Guy. Hence the non-DVD company name: 'We wanted a name that is associated with movies rather than a particular technology.'

Those in the States have been DVD'd up for quite a while now. The UK lags behind in take-up, but 2000 could be the year of the DVD. Projections for sales of players in the UK start at a conservative million, but the market will also cross over from film buffs into the mainstream with a certain launch...

'The Sony P2 is fully DVD compatible,' beams Guy, eyes widening. 'God knows how many of those they're going to sell.' Movietrak's market could treble this year. Better get those envelope-stuffers hired.

GIMME SHELTER Psst: wanna see some puppies?

GIVE US A HOME

www.giveusahome.co.uk

In the thrusting dotcom world of cut-throat capitalism there are unsavoury characters who would watch *101 Dalmatians* and regard Cruella De Vil as a role model. Irving Graham, on the other hand, would worry about re-housing all those loveable spotty dogs.

Indeed, it was after watching *Pet Rescue* that Irving searched the Internet for a dog for his son. Finding none, the genial Geordie decided to set up a pet rehousing service. The site, giveusahome.co.uk, duly mushroomed, and within a few months it was galloping towards the 2,000-page mark.

'It takes over your life,' Irving says, not unreasonably. 'Until recently, it's been from 9am till two in the morning, work work work.' However, the one-man, bedroom-based operation has been swelled by the addition of James Gould, 'a student who lives round the corner', who helps Irving out with the Shockwave graphics which complement the touching lists of lost, found and homeless pets.

Does all the hard work bring financial reward? In short, no. 'I've got a sponsor now, Petsathome.com; they give me £200 a week, and I give £100 to James to do the Shock.' But surely the overheads are low? 'Out of that £100 I've got to pay the phone bill, pay for cameras to send out to the shelters all around the country and pay for the developing.' Is there no end to this man's charity? Again, no.

'It's been from 9am till two in the morning, work work work'

'I'm going to try to find another sponsor for the shelters because I've promised that for every camera we send out, we'll also send a cheque for £25. I've put myself on the line there!'

Expansion is possible, particularly with the popularity of the Shockwave section, Dib, Dab, Doo & Dilly too. 'I've been getting emails asking for T-shirts, baseball caps and games, but I don't even know how to set up a shop and credit facilities online.' Would Irving consider getting help? 'If there were more people and it was organised properly, it'd be run much better. It'd be nice for someone to get in touch about the marketing side – obviously with a percentage going to the shelters.'

Giveusahome: truly a dog's best friend.

WORDS: GARY PARKINSON; PICTURES: STEVE ORINO, ROBERT WHITROW

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WORDS: SARAH WAKELY; PICTURES: NICK WRIGHT, EMPICS

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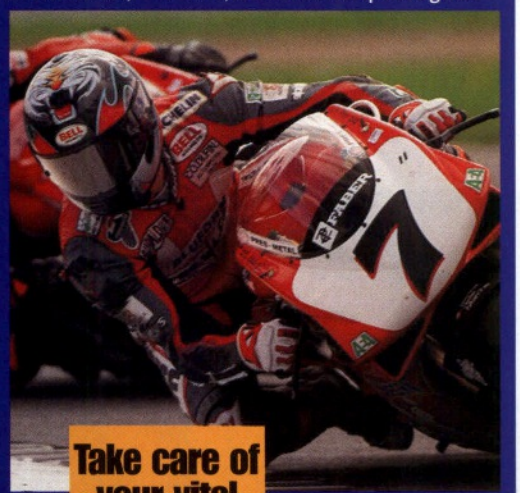
MOTORCYCLE MAN

Where to get suited up to burn some rubber. And not a Hell's Angel in sight

There's something about bikers that sets them apart from the rest of society – they possess a passion that can only be satisfied by balancing precariously on a vast lump of metal, come rain or shine. It probably has something to do with the freedom that a motorbike gives, and the combination of horsepower to a lack of weight; in other words, the sheer oh-my-God-how-fun-is-this? hell of it.

If you are one of the afflicted, and you really must race round at break-neck speeds *á la* Barry Sheene, it's vital that you protect yourself as best you can. Leathers should be well-armoured, boots must be sturdy, and everything should be the best quality you can afford. Despite how it might appear, not all helmets offer the same amount of protection. And although bike jackets are currently the height of fashion, don't succumb to a cheap one for riding use, even if it does look more attractive than a scantily-clad Gail Porter. Unless you want to find it ripped to shreds and the metal zip imitating a firework display as you slide down the road on your stomach, that is. And we're guessing you probably don't.

Bike gear doesn't have to be boring. As you'll have noticed from the little lot on the left, leathers don't have to be black, and helmets don't have to be dull. It is perfectly possible to look good and be safe at the same time. And to show you how, *the net* has compiled a guide to the best gear available, to take care of your vital appendages without compromising your street-cred. And it's possible to buy every single bit online. Yup, even the bike.



Take care of your vital appendages without sacrificing any of your street-cred

Don't be under any illusions – good apparel isn't cheap. But shop around and you'll more than likely come across a bargain. So cast your eyes downwards for our pick of the best online bike stores...

HOW THE SITES COMPARE

BIKE STOP *www.bikestop.co.uk*
A good selection of gear, including a lot of Dainese stuff. Extremely easy to use. ★★★★

SONDEL SPORT *www.sondel.co.uk*
A beautifully-designed site with a great selection of products. Ride there now... ★★★★★

HEIN GERICKE *www.hein-gericke.com*
A reasonable selection from the company's catalogue available online. ★★★★

SOUND DISTRIBUTION *www.sound-dist.co.uk*
An excellent site, which lets you try various-sized leathers before you commit. ★★★★★

M&P *www.mandp.co.uk*
A limited range – and visitors might find the fact there are no pictures of the products frustrating. ★★★

BIKENET *www.bikenet.com*
One of the very few places where you can buy a bike online – and they offer astonishingly low prices. What more could you want? ★★★★★

FREE FOR ALL?

With ISPs climbing over each other to offer unmetered access to the Net, call charges might become a thing of the past. Steve Shipside cuts through the hype...

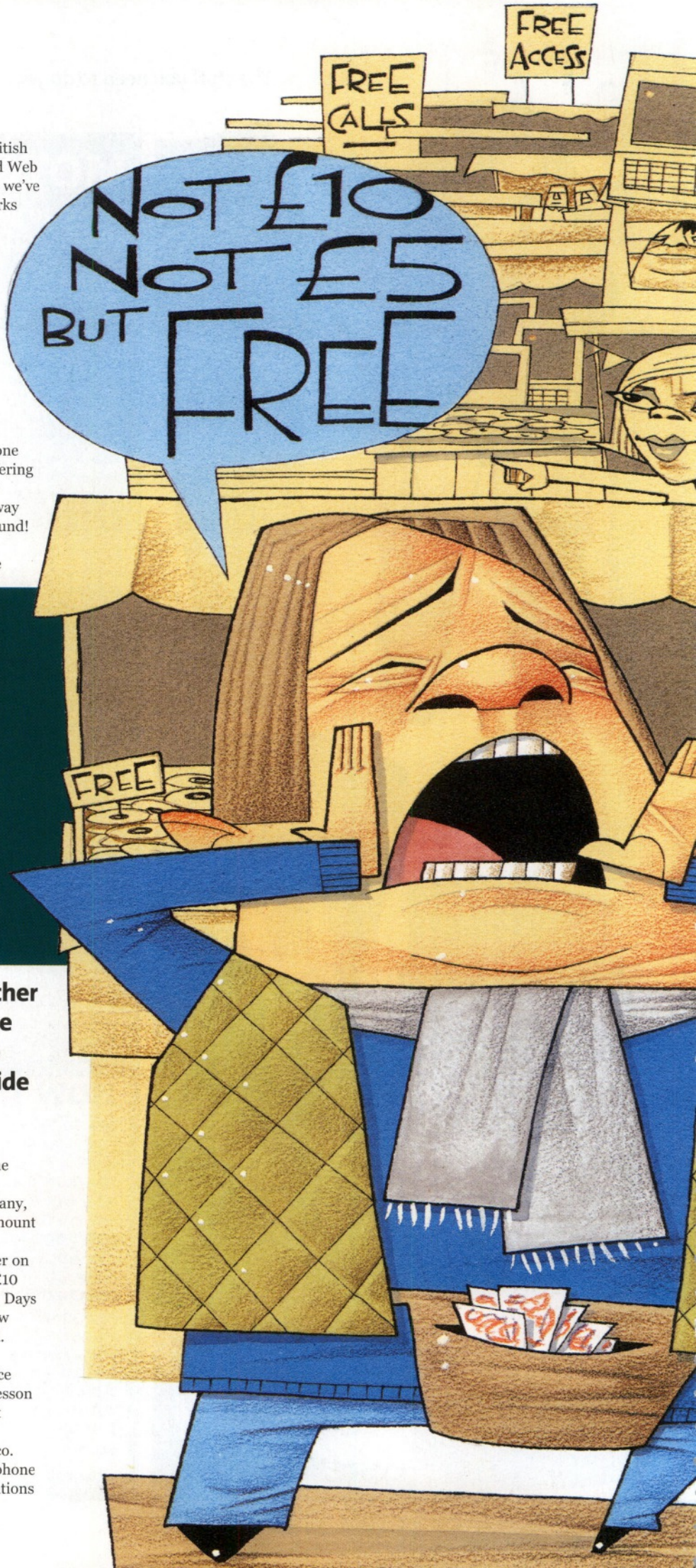
Did we miss something? For years now, British Net users been clamouring for unmetered Web access and free phone calls, and for years we've been told that it wasn't feasible, what works in the US won't necessarily work here, etc etc.

Turns out, though, we were playing at one of those stand-offs where nothing happens until someone blinks, at which point all hell breaks loose. Well, AltaVista blinked. The search engine (sorry, portal) company announces in March that it's going to offer unlimited Web access – and suddenly everyone's at it. NTL, Telewest, BT, Cable and Wireless, Virgin, Tiny, X-Stream, LineOne, Freeserve, Breathe.net and Screaming.net have all revealed plans for either unmetered or low-cost access, and more are undoubtedly in the offing. Supanet has even gone one step further, announcing that it will not only be offering free and unmetered access, but will pay you £10 to register. Phone bills, it seems, are about to go the way of monthly ISP subscription charges. Trebles all round!

Or perhaps not. While any reduction in prices is more than welcome, this recent activity is not quite the free-for-all it might appear to be. Very few of the deals on offer are actually free – many involve commitments to switch to another telephone company, sign up with a cable provider, or spend a certain amount of money per month on voice calls.

Some of them are also clearly struggling to deliver on their promise. Take Telewest, which announced a £10 per month unmetered service called Surfunlimited. Days later the company was forced to stop signing up new customers after it had been deluged by the demand. Telewest has done the honourable thing and compensated users for the poor quality of the service (they'll get £10 credited to their account), but the lesson is clear about coping with the surge in demand that comes with the promise of unmetered access.

Nor is Telewest alone in being all talk and no telco. Reports suggest that Lineone, in partnership with phone company Quip, may have had thousands of registrations



ILLUSTRATIONS: KEVIN FEBRUARY

While any reduction in prices is welcome, very few of the deals on offer are actually free

eBay.co.uk is where all kinds of like-minded people meet to swap stories and buy and sell just about everything under the sun.

From books, movies and music, through photography and sports memorabilia, to electronics and computers, if it's worth talking about, if it's worth money, it's worth looking for at eBay.co.uk

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Thousands of auctions happening right now – and it's free to register!

www.ebay.co.uk

The question is, can we really expect the free lunches to keep coming?

for its free unmetered service, but is looking at a backlog when it comes to actually hooking users up. 'It's like standing on a street corner, giving away tenners,' laughs Paul Myers, managing director of X-Stream. 'Are you ever going to have enough? My guess is that companies will start limiting the numbers. The problem is that they've massively underestimated the popularity of the service. AltaVista's switchboard collapsed after the announcement – they couldn't handle the voice calls, and that's before they even start sending data. Breathe made a lot of fuss with a big campaign but it turns out its only really available to 50,000 people. Mind you, at least that's realistic.'

THE HIDDEN COSTS

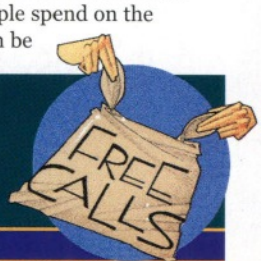
Myers knows a bit about 'free' lunches. Despite Freeserve's claim, the UK giant was not the first to offer free subscriptions. X-Stream was. Now the ISP also has a free access offer, using an 0800 number, but it's being run as a trial. It makes it very clear you'll have a hard time getting online, and recommends using the ISP's local call charge number if you *have* to get on. They're not kidding: even with your modem on auto redial you'll be pushed to get access – a sign of how hungry we are for unmetered access.

Myers is right about limiting the numbers – some ISPs are already announcing quotas. AltaVista has said it will be limiting its offer, phasing in no more than 90,000 people per month. If you think that's a tad tight, then you won't be happy to hear that Supanet, the company that promises to pay you, will actually only be shelling out to 1,000 lucky people. Incidentally, one of the ironies about all this is that while AltaVista sparked the scramble for free access, it doesn't currently offer any service at all. Nor has it announced any fees. Nor can you pre-register. While an annual figure of between £30 and £50 is being touted, the fact is that AltaVista has not specified any such figure. All it's done is announce there will be a set-up fee and an annual renewal charge, but there will be no metered call charges.

'That £30-£50 figure didn't come from AltaVista – it was guessed at by a newspaper,' comments Myers. 'But what they were doing was stirring up the market. Everyone else reacted before they'd even agreed a telco deal.' So with the current furore built on a foundation of pure imagination, can we really expect the free lunches to keep coming? 'I don't actually think they'll stop,' says Myers, 'but I think there will be restrictions. Wait three months, and once the first quarter's gone they may have to find new price models. Maybe after a time, prices will go up. Certainly the recent volatility of Internet stocks makes it less of a great proposal for a board to sign off millions on an Internet company.'

Indeed, price models are already in place. With the arguable exception of X-Stream's 0800 service, all 'freebies' will cost you – albeit much less than you probably pay now. NTL, for example, promises completely free Net access. Which, if you are an existing NTL customer, is indeed the case.

But if you currently use BT, then taking up the free offer involves using NTL for phone calls, which you do by plugging an adaptor into your phone socket. The adaptor costs £10, and then the Net access is free. Oh, that's as long as you spend at least a further £10 on voice calls per month. It's not totally unmetered, either – NTL in its wisdom has decided to cut you off after two hours. The reason? NTL doesn't specify, instead palming you off with the observation that 'the average time people spend on the Internet in one go can be



THE UNMETERED DEAL LOW-DOWN

NAME	UNMETERED	CHANGE TELCO?	COST
ALTAVISTA *www.altavista.co.uk*	Yes	Not saying	Despite kicking it all off, AltaVista remains schtum on costs, regardless of what you have read elsewhere
BREATHE.NET *www.timetobreathe.net*	Yes (for 50,000 only)	No	£50(!) set-up fee
BT SURFTIME RESIDENTIAL (1) *www.bt.com*	Only off-peak	Not if you're BT	£15.25 per month
BT SURFTIME RESIDENTIAL (2) *www.bt.com*	Yes	Not if you're BT	£29.25 per month
CABLE AND WIRELESS *www.cwcom.net*	No	Yes, to C&W	£29.99 per month buys you 75 hours off-peak; after that you pay by the minute
FREESERVE *www.freeserve.co.uk*	BT only	No	Minimum £10 per month on voice calls, and you might need a redirector box
LINEONE *www.lineone.net*	Yes	Need a redirect box	Box costs £20, plus minimum of £5 per month voice calls
NTL *www.ntl.com*	Yup	That depends*	If BT outside NTL area then £10 for the call box, plus £10 minimum a month in voice calls. Support: £1/min
SCREAMING.NET *www.screaming.net*	Yes	Yes – to LocalTel	None
SUPANET *www.supanet.com*	Yes	No	They pay *you* a tenner. But forget it – only 1,000 subscribers allowed
TELEWEST *www.telewest.com*	Yes	Yes, to TeleWest cable	£10 per month voice calls
TINY *www.tiny.com/uk/index.html*	Yes	TBA	TBA
VIRGIN *www.virgin.net*	Yes	TBA	TBA
WORLD ONLINE *www.worldonline.co.uk*	Yes	Yes – to LocalTel	£20 set-up fee, plus £14.99 per month line rental
X-STREAM *www.x-stream.co.uk*	Yes	No – 0800 number	None, but it's only a trial so there is no guarantee that you'll get through

*You don't have to move from BT, but if you switch to NTL it makes the whole thing free

ALL INFORMATION CORRECT AT TIME OF WRITING

BOX MAN
boxman.co.uk

Prices exclude postage and packaging.

Gran Turismo 2
PlayStation
£29.99

Theme Park World
PlayStation
£29.99

Backstreet Boys
Millennium
£10.99

The Chemical Brothers
Surrender
£10.99

Buena Vista Social Club
£15.99

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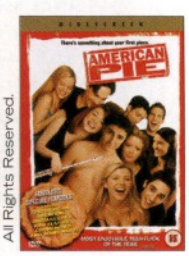
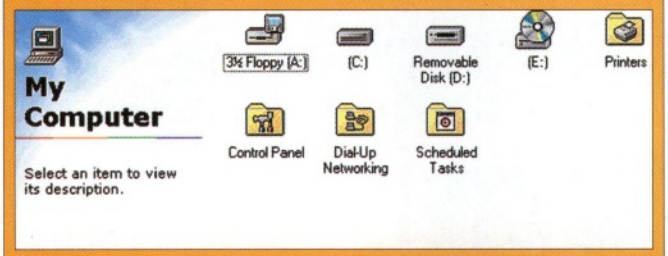


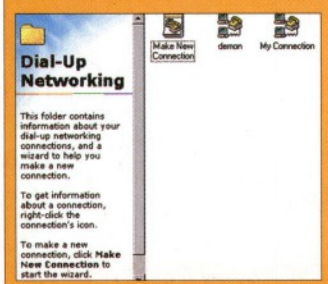
American Pie
£19.99

SETTING UP A NEW ACCOUNT

Switching ISPs the easy way



1 From your desktop double click the My Computer icon. Then double-click on the folder called Dial-Up Networking.


Dial-Up Networking
Make New Connection
demon
My Connection
This folder contains information about your dial-up networking connections, and a wizard to help you make a new connection.
To get information about a connection, right-click the connection's icon.
To make a new connection, click Make New Connection to start the wizard.

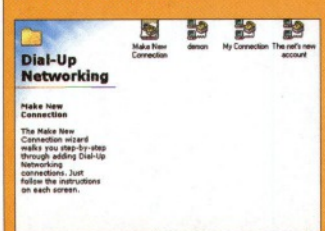
2 From here double-click on Make New Connection.

3 Give your new account a name. The computer should automatically detect the modem you will use to dial up.

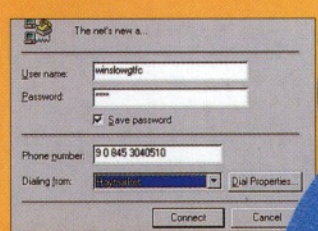
4 Fill in the phone number that will connect you to the Net. This will be provided by your ISP.

You have successfully created a new Dial-Up Networking connection called:
Click Finish to save it in your Dial-Up Networking folder. Double-click it to connect.
To edit this connection later, click it, click the File menu and then click Properties.
< Back
Finish
Cancel

5 It's that simple. Hit the Finish button and you've just set up a new connection.


Dial-Up Networking
Make New Connection
demon
My Connection
The net's new account
Make New Connection
The Make New Connection wizard walks you step-by-step through adding Dial-Up Networking connections. Just follow the instructions on each screen.

6 Go to the Dial-Up Networking folder and your new connection is visible. Double-click on it.



7 Hit Connect and *voila* – you'll be online with your new ISP before you know it.

anywhere from 15 to 45 minutes, so we felt that two hours was a reasonable session time to allow before you would have to reconnect'. Best know what you're doing, too, since technical support is a healthy £1 per minute.

Freeserve has two tariffs: one offers unlimited Net access if you spend £10 per month on calls, and an off-peak service for £6.99 a month. They recommend you buy a redirect box, the price of which hasn't been set.

Similarly, Lineone offers free unmetered Net access. Well, free apart from the £20 box you have to buy to redirect calls to its telco, Quip, and the £5 a month you have to spend on voice calls. Telewest's SurfUnlimited also has a £10-a-month voice traffic condition.

The good news is that even with a tenner per month, voice limits and absurd tech support pricing, a medium to heavy Net user is going to see benefits immediately. Also, because the box you plug into the socket is merely a redirect device, you haven't entered into a contract with a new telephony provider (although cable companies like NTL and Telewest will strongly advise you to switch to their cable TV/phone/Net package). The bad news is that if you opt for the plug-in box you are still renting a line from BT, which means having to pay the quarterly charge. Another bit of grit in the free lunch bonanza.

With some unmetered systems, such as Screaming.net, you have to move your telephone service to another provider, in this case Localtel. Bear in mind the difficulties that involves – Screaming.net admits that it takes BT eight days to transfer the service. As well as ensuring your new provider isn't going to end up being more costly (unlikely, as you're switching from good old BT), you'll have to specify services you want to retain. By default BT will only transfer the line, so unless you mention things like 1471 and BT Call Minder to them, they'll vanish in transit.

WILL WE EVER BE FREE?

BT, incidentally, seems to have been one of the slowest to react, and while the offers will doubtless have changed by the time you read this, at the time of writing BT SurfTime residential, which offers unmetered Net access from home, will set you back £29.25 a month. Still, at least that's better than Cable and Wireless, which seems to have missed the point of being a cable operator by asking for £29.99 a month up front, for which you get 75 hours off-peak surfing or 25 hours of peak. Not unmetered at all, then. After that you're paying 1.8p a minute during the day and 0.6p on weekends and evenings. And that's for current Cable & Wireless customers. Perhaps the nice people at C&W should go back and take a look at Telewest and NTL.

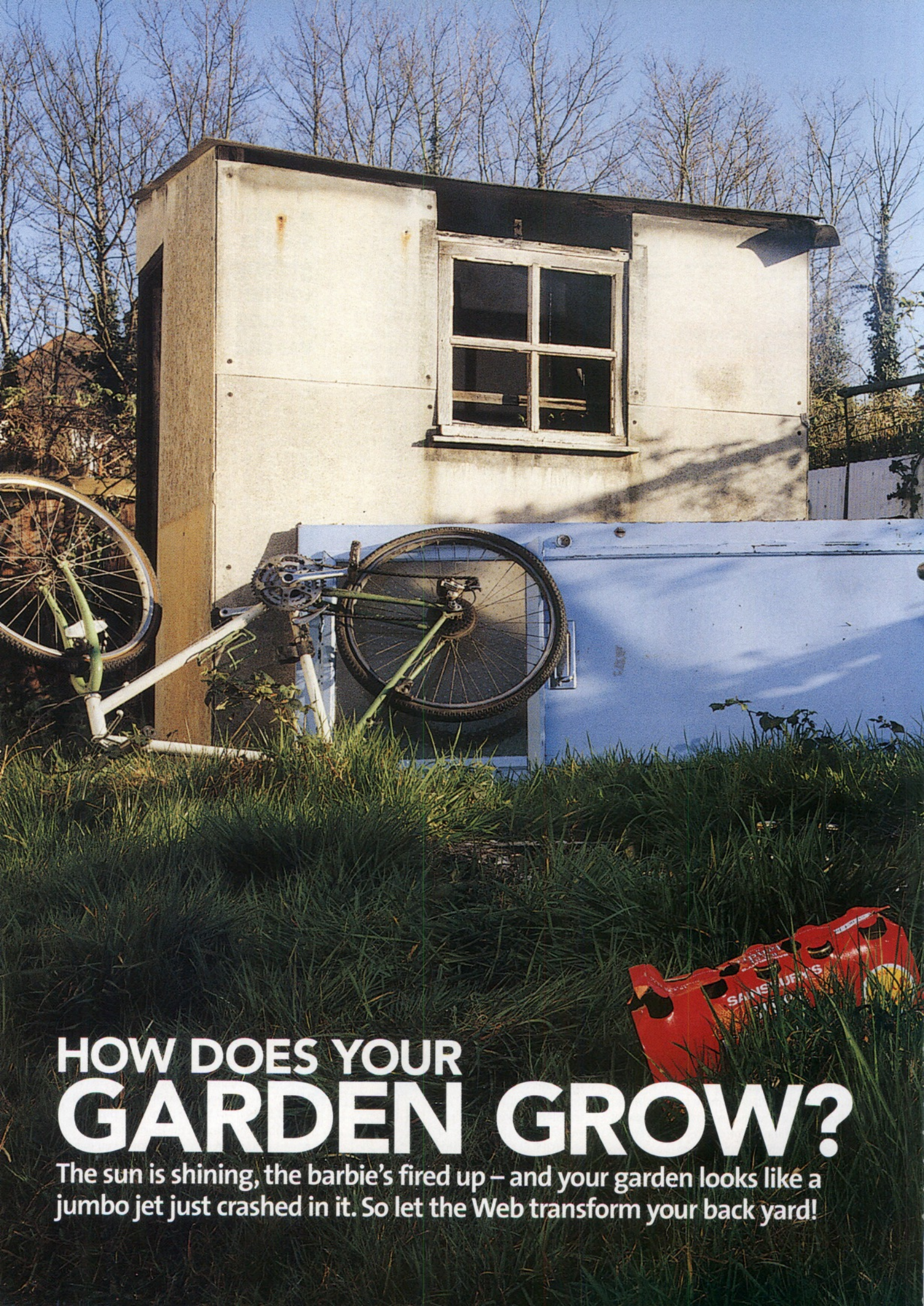
The whole industry has taken a great step in getting us online for as long as we like

Bear in mind that the majority of these schemes also involve switching ISP to the new host's service. Now while Net access is Net access, and once online you can still pick up Web mail from any ISP you've used, anyone using a paid-for ISP (such as AOL) will still find themselves paying that ISP for usage on top of the new free provider.

All of which means that in order to have truly free Net access you have to be an existing user of a cable company, prepared to switch ISP, confident enough to never call tech support, and able to tear yourself away from the Net for long enough to call your loved ones to the tune of a tenner a month. Oh, and you might want to question the use of the term 'unmetered' if you sign up with a supplier that cuts you off every two hours, all because Nanny thinks that's quite enough now, poppet.

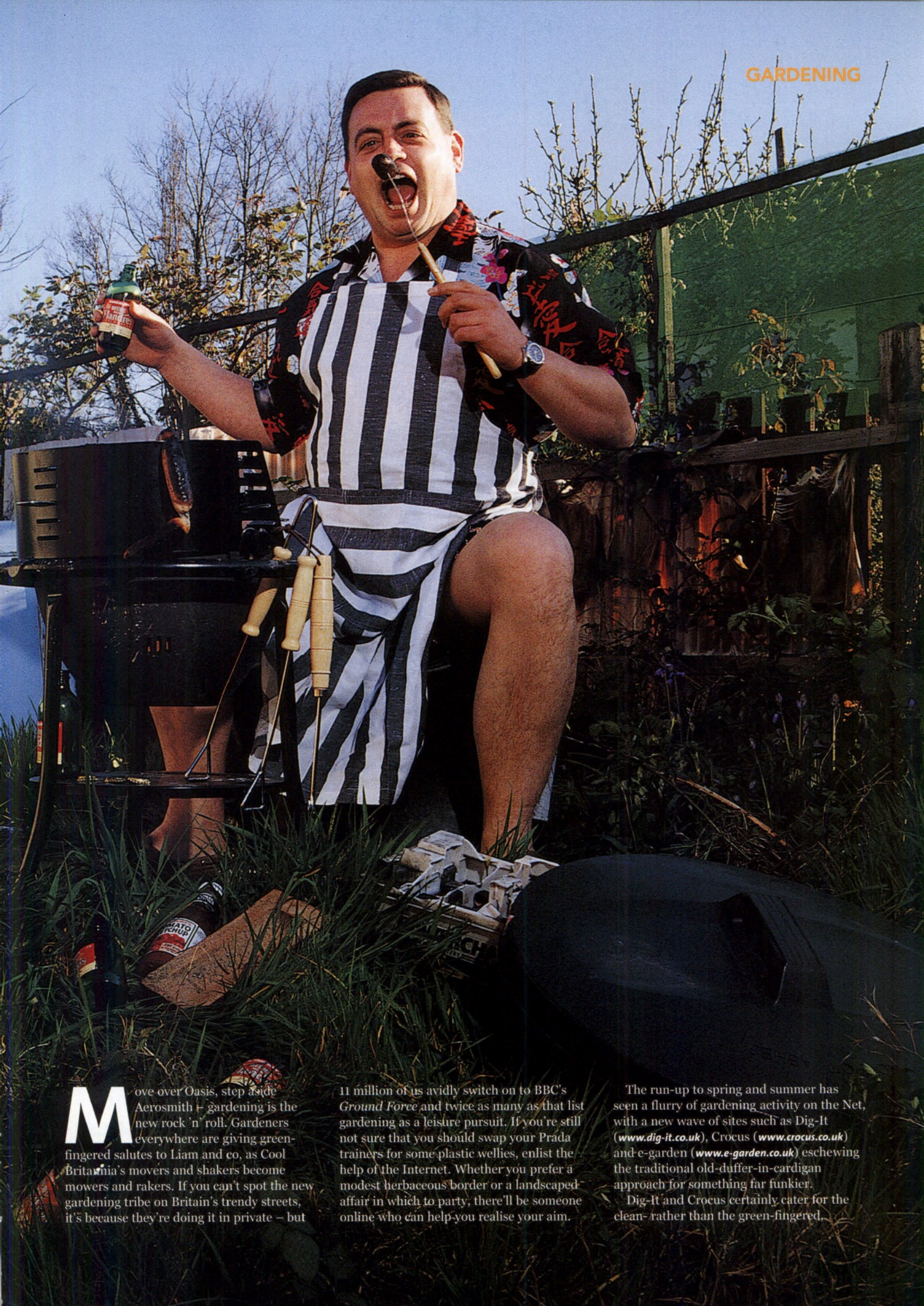
Whinging aside, however, the fact is that the whole industry has taken a great step forward in terms of getting us all online, for as long as we like, without breaking the bank. Do not, however, be fooled by ads with the questionable use of the word 'free'. All the companies doing deals have their terms and conditions laid out on their sites. Check those conditions – in particular, look out for call minimum charges, the cost of redirect boxes, and how much the tech support will be if you need it. If invited to change telco then think hard about how much the disruption will cost you, and whether you suspect you may be lured to another telco at the next round of price announcements.

Sadly, it seems that when your gran shook her head sagely and told you there was no such thing as a free lunch, she probably had unmetered Net access in mind.



HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

The sun is shining, the barbie's fired up – and your garden looks like a jumbo jet just crashed in it. So let the Web transform your back yard!



Move over Oasis, step aside Aerosmith – gardening is the new rock 'n' roll. Gardeners everywhere are giving green-fingered salutes to Liam and co, as Cool Britannia's movers and shakers become mowers and rakers. If you can't spot the new gardening tribe on Britain's trendy streets, it's because they're doing it in private – but 11 million of us avidly switch on to BBC's *Ground Force* and twice as many as that list gardening as a leisure pursuit. If you're still not sure that you should swap your Prada trainers for some plastic wellies, enlist the help of the Internet. Whether you prefer a modest herbaceous border or a landscaped affair in which to party, there'll be someone online who can help you realise your aim.

The run-up to spring and summer has seen a flurry of gardening activity on the Net, with a new wave of sites such as Dig-It (***www.dig-it.co.uk***), Crocus (***www.crocus.co.uk***) and e-garden (***www.e-garden.co.uk***) eschewing the traditional old-duffer-in-cardigan approach for something far funkier.

Dig-It and Crocus certainly cater for the clean- rather than the green-fingered,

HOME-GROWN SITES

Bored with bulbs? Try these garden ideas

HIP ON HEMP

www.hiponhemp.com

It's not in your mum's *A-Z of Plants and Shrubs*, and that long-haired chap you bought the house from (a happy sort of fella) was distinctly reticent when you asked its identity. Even so, it seems such a shame to dig up that pretty, serrated-leafed plant growing at the bottom of your garden. It's not like it's harming anyone, and perhaps a trip to this site will provide some suggestions on putting it to good use. Hip on Hemp is still under construction in places, but sells everything from 'hackey sacks' to hip-packs, coffee to candles. Products are 'beautiful to the eye and wonderful to the body', and there's even a helpful panel answering the question: 'Where can I get more hemp?'

A-LIFE GARDEN

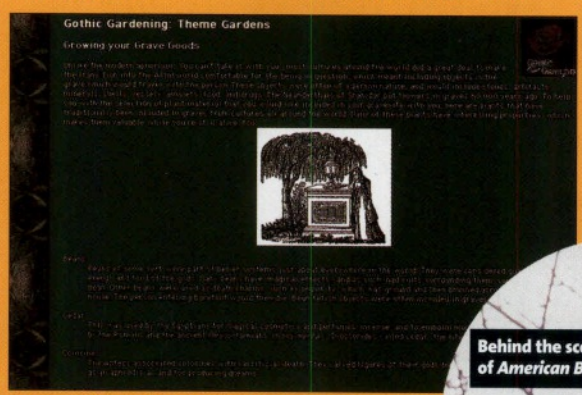
alifegarden.com

And you thought Zen gardens were a tad leftfield? This Hiroshima-based site allows you to play God by creating your very own 'A-Life Garden', inhabited by artificial, living creatures with their own DNA data. But it's a jungle out there, literally, and don't expect anybody to help you out with growing advice. Seems to be played mainly by Americans and the odd Japanese and Swede. Best viewed after a few cans of Sapporo.

GOTH'S GARDEN

www.goth.net/news.html

With Growing your Grave Goods, the Abortionist's Garden and the Little Greenhouse of Horrors among them, Goth Net kindly offers 13 alternative gardening ideas. We don't doubt that the guy behind this is a Goth, but he's clearly also a gardener (to attract bats, grow salvia and phlox). Check out 'Potpourri' for everything from Cemetery Horticulture to A Mummy's Herbal, and, as for gardening ideas 'Beyond the 13th', don't even go there.



Percius Throwercis: sadly extinct

Behind the scenes of *American Beauty*

With a flourish the garden fairy sprang into life

providing 'instant gardens' courtesy of their pre-designed borders. Pick a design, buy the bulbs and you're well on the way to beautiful borders. Both provide planting plans, and Crocus will even send their boys around to plant it for you. And the price for such unashamed laziness? Peter Clay, marketing director of Crocus, says that you can get away with as little as £41.65, while a basic but nonetheless impressive border from Dig-It can be had for £52. Both sites also sell garden furniture and accessories (check out Dig-It's Jamaican hammocks), as well as offer email helplines and advice.

There's a lot of City money behind some of the new-style gardening sites: Lord Rothschild is a backer of Crocus, while one of the partners behind Dig-It is Erica Robb, formerly involved in raising money from venture capitalists. If you thought they were leaping on to the media-labelled 'time-poor, cash-rich society', you'd probably be right. However, rest assured that there's plenty of gardening nous behind the sites. Nicky Roeber of Dig-It has both green and designer credential, having been listed in *Harpers and Queen*'s Gardener A-List and boasting of a luvvie client list that includes Lady Caroline Conran and actor Simon Callow; while e-garden

There's plenty of gardening nous behind the sites

WORDS: DAVID HURST; PICTURE: STEVE ORINO; PANELS: SUE WEEKES; PICTURES: RETNA, IMAGEBANK, SCOPE, KOBAL COLLECTION

'What we need is a Dimmock...'

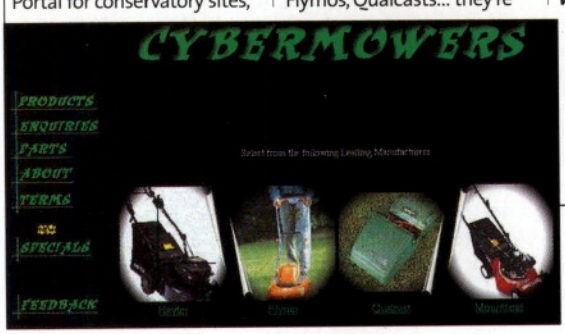
page 46), but look out for more sites offering makeovers.

If you're quite happy with the way your garden looks but want to find out how you can spruce it up or just keep it in good order, there are a mass of sites that'll help. Good starting points are the gardening TV show pages: ***www.bbc.co.uk/homefrontgarden/links.shtml*** offers links to a host of sites such as BBC Gardener's World (***www.gardenersworld.beeb.com***), which has excellent plant fact sheets and a calendar of must-do jobs. The irrepressible Ground Force team, meanwhile, can be found at ***www.bbc.co.uk/groundforce***. The site includes a number of different sections, such as Weekend Gardener and Expert Advice, plus live chat from Tommy and Charlie (if it's just Charlie Dimmock pictures you're after, go to her fan club page at ***www.geocities.com/TelevisionCity/Satellite/1311/index.html*** – love her or loathe her, you have to admit that she's a better advert for gardening than Arthur Fowler and his allotment ever were.

If you're really getting into this gardening lark now, ***www.botany.com*** has comprehensive lists and hints on cultivating and propagating, plus a useful list of common as well as botanical names. Similarly, the Royal Horticultural Society site at ***www.rhs.co.uk*** is a mine of information (look out for its virtual garden created for the Chelsea Flower Show), and Expert Gardener (***www.igarden.co.uk***) offers solid, earthy gardening advice and you are welcomed on the home page by Charlie and Alan. For advice on organic gardening, go to the Henry Doubleday Research Association at ***www.hdra.org.uk*** or the Soil Association site at ***www.soilassociation.org***.

If you want to have a nose at other people's gardens for inspiration, Gardening365 at ***www.oxalis.co.uk*** has an Spider Garden (***www.spidergarden.co.uk***) and Greenfingers (***www.greenfingers.com***), and by the time you're reading this, we'll be days away from the gardening calendar's main event, the Chelsea Flower Show (23-26 May), when the new sites were aiming to be fully functional. Many are intending to offer online garden design eventually, which at the moment is limited to only a few. We've tested some of the services currently available (see (***www.e-garden.co.uk***) has some of gardening's best writers, such as Peter Seabrook and Roddy Llewellyn, on subjects as diverse as why everyone should grow chrysanthemums to how to clean houseplants.

As we were going to press, two more sites of a similar ilk were about to go online:



Whatever it is, it looks painful

TOOLING UP & DECKING OUT

From gnomes to the latest mower, where to buy all your garden requisites

CAPITAL GARDENS
www.capitalgardens.co.uk
Europe's largest online garden centre – free gardening gloves with every order.

CMS GARDENS
www.cmsgardens.co.uk
Twenty per cent discount on Alan Titchmarsh's tool range – get his lopper for £32.99.

CONSERVATORIES ONLINE
www.conservatoriesonline.com
Portal for conservatory sites, which features an online quotation form to make a stab at working out how much to shell out.

CROCUS
www.crocus.co.uk
Vying with Dig-It for funkiest garden site, this sells over 6,000 plants, books and gifts, which include a beehive and cow thermometer.

CYBER MOWERS
www.cybermowers.co.uk
Flymos, Qualcasts... they're all here, plus a Suffolk Punch with alloy deck – smart. No secure server though, so we recommend mail order.

DIG-IT
www.dig-it.co.uk
As well as offering instant gardens (see page 46), the site sells all gardening accoutrements: furniture, lighting, barbecues and hammocks, as well as tools.

E-GARDEN
www.e-garden.co.uk
Another example of the new wave of garden sites. Sells plants and cut flowers, including the exotic (well, bamboo), as well as tools, waterproof socks and gloves and gardening gifts.

GARDENWISE DIRECT
www.gardenwise.co.uk
Mail-order and online store selling garden waste reducers and mowers.

GARDEN FRAMES
www.gardenframes.co.uk
A trellis for your roses, or maybe a pergola? This is the place. A tad ornate for some, but if you're into ironwork...

GARDEN MACHINERY
www.gardenmachinery.com
Tool up here with power sanders, saws and the like. It also sells outdoor 'toys' such as peddle trikes and scooters.

Another lucky victim gets to grips with her water feature

interactive map which features well-known gardens in the UK and Ireland that you can view.

For ultimate inspiration, go to the Kew Gardens site at ***www.rbg.kew.org.uk*** For more attainable, Joe Public efforts, just search 'Personal Gardens' at ***www.yahoo.com***, which include outlandish affairs from as far afield as Tasmania. While scanning the Antipodean sites, we found another excellent one at ***gardenbed.com/index.cfm***, which, apart from less relevant advice (how to grow a pineapple), has some usual tips such as how to stop a cat using your garden as a toilet. Elsewhere, US site The Gardening Helper (***www.thegardenhelper.com***) is well worth a peek, covering a mass of topics from planting roses to pruning rubber plants.

If you want someone to chat to, buy yourself a gnome

If you find yourself bookmarking sites that offer this degree of detail, you're well and truly embedded in the green-fingered set, so you'll be wanting to chat with other like-minded men and women. Book into ***www.gardentalk.co.uk***, where you can swap seeds and meet new gardening friends via the messageboards.

If you fail to make new chums here, you can always get some animals to talk to. Try ***www.birdsforever.com***, which is useful for urban dwellers who want to attract the birds, while ***www.aquatics-online.co.uk*** will help you create the perfect environment for pondlife. And if you're desperate for companionship, you can always buy yourself a gnome at ***www.traditionshop.de***.

While we're on the subject of dumpy little creatures, why not take a look at ***www.bbc.co.uk/education/teletubbies/activities/comeandsee/satn.shtmlDipsy***, which has instructions on how to make a mustard and cress seed tribute to Dipsy the Teletubbie.

TOOLING UP & DECKING OUT

Further sites for those essential items, such as pixie scenes

GARDEN SUPPLY
www.gardensupply.co.uk
Excellent one-stop shop for gardening goodies.

GNOME SERVE
www.gnomereserve.co.uk/models.htm
Gnome heaven, plus a tailor-made pixie scene.

GREENFINGERS
www.greenfingers.co.uk
Visit the well-stocked virtual shop.

JUST FIR
www.patio-furniture.co.uk
Selection of dead-posh parasols and furniture.

PEPE GARDEN FURNITURE
www.pepegarden.com/shopframes.htm
If a bit of Baltic pine is up your street, look no further.

ROYAL ARROW
www.royalarrow.co.uk/lutbench.htm
Stylish outdoor chairs and tables, plus recliners.

SCREWFIX
www.screwfix.com
Great for getting tools at short notice.

THE TRADITION SHOP
www.tradition-shop.de
German gnomes.

WADHAMS
www.internetshopping.com/setup.asp?goto=/Wadhams
Topiary frames, from a reclining moggy to a Jack Russell.

Mr Hand proudly held his coveted 'Arfur' award

Then again, once you've got into easy gardening and realised that green is the new black, you may not be going out much to clubs. After all, who needs sex and drugs when you can have decks and slugs? So wave bye-bye to Oasis; get a mower instead and roll with it.

ROCK COVERS AND OTHER ESSENTIALS

When the local garden centre can't help...

GREENING THE MEAN STREETS
members.aol.com/doitvert/greenin.html
'I made those flower beds,' says the 18-year-old dragging on a cigarette. 'So any who messes with this garden messes with me.' Just one of the petty offenders whose sentence it was to plant a community garden in Brooklyn. 'Where there was rubble, there are now gazebos and goldfish ponds,' says the site, and even the drug dealers have fled. If they can transform one of New York's war zones, just think what they could do for your patch.

'I'd try bone-meal and regular mulching, sir'

GARDEN ROCK COVERS
www.gardenrockcovers.com
'Your imagination will be the only limit to the uses of our rock covers.' This US company works on a simple premise: if you've got something unsightly in your garden they'll turn it into a rock, or 'yard art with its dark tan granite, moss jade, bronze slate...' And you though radiator covers were an act of great vanity.

THE MANAFORT BROTHERS
www.manafortbrothers.com/concrete.html
Got something to bury under the patio? These are your boys. This lot can turn an area from 'earth to steel' – and presumably all points in between. Many of their jobs are poured in 'record time' (1,260 cubic yards of concrete in 10 hours, for instance). Manafort means 'strong hand' – and we're not arguing.

ANIMAL PESTS
landscaping.about.com/homegarden/landscaping/library/weekly/mcurrent.htm
UK gardeners can probably skip the sections on groundhogs, chipmunks and black bears, although the section on deodorising a skunk smell might come in handy one day. Elsewhere it covers more realistic bases, from mole control to rat management. Did you know a mole can tunnel under your lawn at a rate of 15 feet an hour? Think how that could play havoc with your herbaceous border.

internet
business
February 2000
£2.95
shopping.com
Why the humble parcel holds the key to your e-business success
Direct Line finally goes online Wireless applications unlock the anytime anywhere culture Incubators – who are the real winners? How to make e-billing work for you

just because sheep follow each other, it doesn't make it right.

another piece of common sense from Internet Business

Email: stephen.dodds@haynet.com

FROM CABBAGE PATCH TO KEW

Aided by our very own green-fingered guru, *the net* takes a look at three garden makeovers which began life on the Internet

THEY SOUND GOOD ON PAPER, POSITIVELY fancy in places in fact, but will the online garden makeovers featured here grow to fruition or fall at the first frost?

To help us assess how well the garden sites have done, we turned to a man who makes his living from the land, and for whom a spade is always a spade, landscape gardener Andrew Jeffery. Andrew isn't adverse to using technology himself in his work (he has his own computer and CAD program on which he carries out his design work) and overall was very impressed with the current crop of gardening sites.

We picked three different types of garden and looked at what the Net could offer us. The first was a simple, low-effort affair, which demanded no knowledge of or interest in gardening. Next up was an average, fairly featureless townhouse garden. And finally, we chose a large, barren landscape.

We picked two of the new-wave gardening sites, Crocus and Dig-It, plus the more established Design and Landscape Centre.

Would our online gardens survive or fall at the first frost?

We gave each a different brief, so the intention is not to compare them like for like. We hope that somewhere in between our extremes, there's something that strikes a chord with your own backyard. Dig in.

CALLING IN THE CAVALRY! When all else has failed, it's time to talk to the experts

DIG-IT

AIM To create a simple, low-maintenance garden, in a limited space, using one of Dig-It's pre-designed borders.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

We chose from a set of options in drop-down menus provided by the site: type of border (mixed shrub/herbaceous), aspect (full sun), soil (sandy), pH (no preference – read 'no idea'), maintenance (low – we're not fools), colour description (cool – what else?).

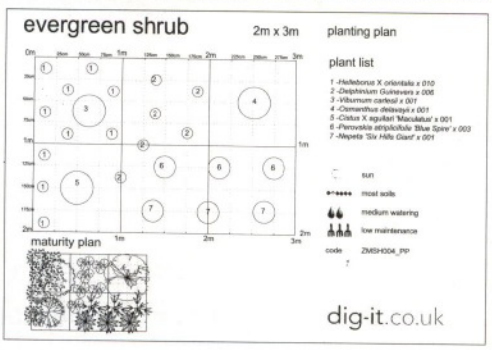
From this we were given several choices and opted for 'Cambridge Blue', which was neither garish nor girlie. The price included all the bulbs and a simple, easy-to-follow planting plan with an overhead diagram. It normally takes seven days to receive this after you've placed the order online. Dig-It is very happy to answer enquiries via email if you have any questions about your selection.

In theory, below becomes above

OUR GARDENER SAID

'Perfect, if you want a simple, straightforward garden. A tad repetitive and could have offered more variety – there's actually only seven types of plants there. Overall though, it meets the brief: an easy-to-follow planting plan and very suitable for the non-gardener.'

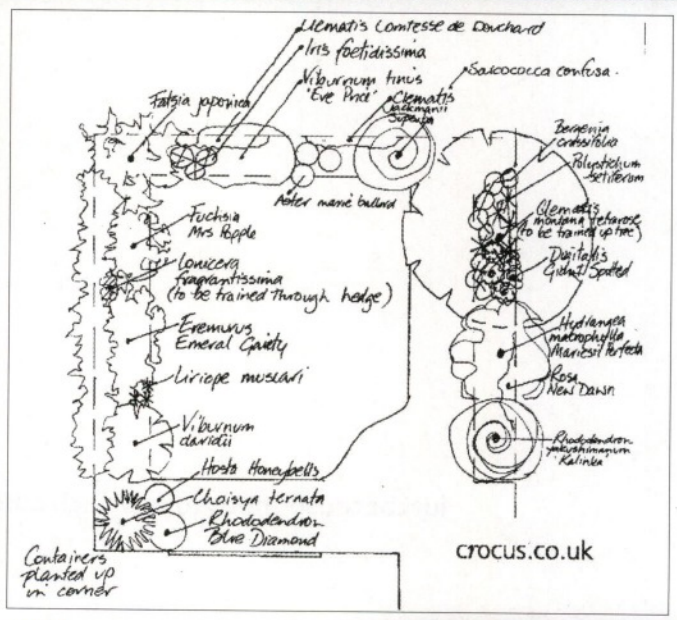
PRACTICALS Pre-designed borders start at £52.50 and go up to £192.50. Our Cambridge Blue cost £132.50. It normally takes seven days to receive the planting plan after you've placed the order online and then seven for the bulbs to be delivered.



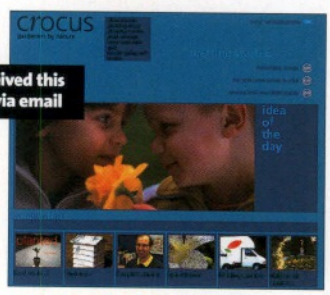
PERFECT FOR Lazy bastards; non-gardeners. And both Dig-It and Crocus' borders are excellent if you want something pretty in a limited garden space.

www.dig-it.co.uk

CROCUS



AIM To deck out an average-size garden in London which had been designed a few years ago but since neglected.



We received this sketch via email

HOW DOES IT WORK?

From the site we printed out a grid on which we sketched our garden and its main features and answered a set of questions (ideally, you also send a photo). Crocus emailed us the above sketch and a planting plan.

OUR GARDENER SAID

'A mixed bag this one: some excellent choices here but others that just aren't suitable. For instance, japonica can reach 10ft and clematis can grow to 30ft, and these are both too big for the garden in my view. A good mixture of all-season plants but the owner should expect to be doing a lot of watering in the summer.'

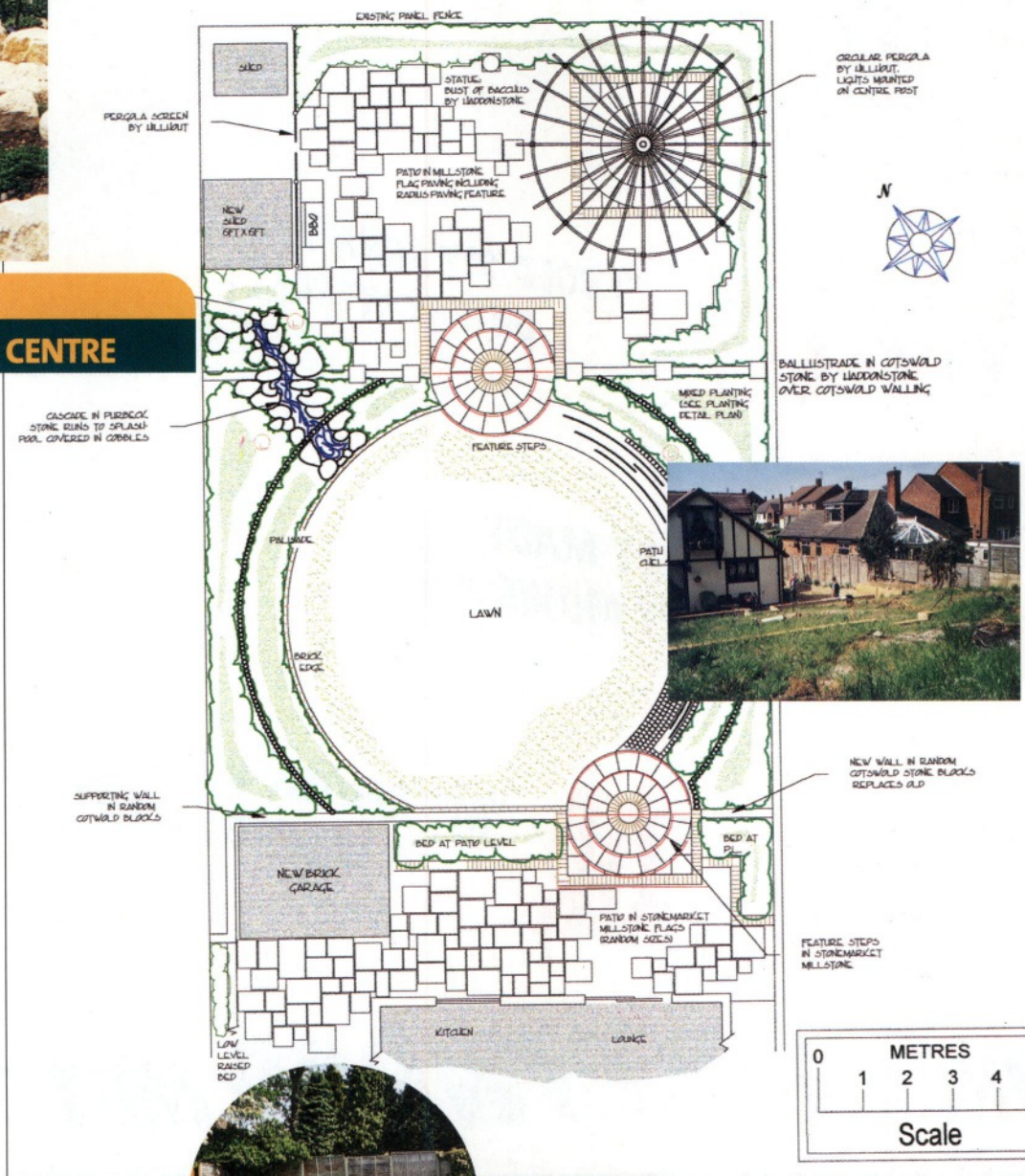
PRACTICALS The cost of our planting plan was £30 (based on £30 per hour rate) and then £248.82 for plants, £140 for planting (optional) and £19.95 delivery, making a total of £438.77. You can expect a 24-to 48-hour turnaround on design.

PERFECT FOR Someone whose garden has all the components, but who's never got off their backside to deck it out properly.

www.crocus.co.uk

WORDS: SUE WEEKES

Behold: from CAD outline (below), to full bloom (left)


OUTLINE DESIGN
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FAX: 01438 821685
EMAIL: COLIN@GARDEN-DESIGN.CO.UK
WEB SITE: WWW.GARDEN-DESIGN.CO.UK
EXISTING PANEL FENCE
SHED
STATUE. BUST OF BACCHUS BY HADDONSTONE
CIRCULAR PERGOLA BY ULLIBUT. LIGHTS MOUNTED ON CENTRE POST
PERGOLA SCREEN BY ULLIBUT
PATIO IN MILLSTONE FLAG PAVING INCLUDING RADIUS PAVING FEATURE
NEW SHED 6FT X 6FT
BBQ
N
BALLUSTRADE IN COTSWOLD STONE BY HADDONSTONE OVER COTSWOLD WALLING
MIXED PLANTING (SEE PLANTING DETAIL PLAN)
CASCADE IN PURBECK STONE RUNS TO SPLASH POOL. COVERED IN COBBLES
FEATURE STEPS
LAWN
BRICK EDGE
SUPPORTING WALL IN RANDOM COTWOLD BLOCKS
NEW WALL IN RANDOM COTSWOLD STONE BLOCKS REPLACES OLD
BED AT PATIO LEVEL
NEW BRICK GARAGE
PATIO IN STONEMARKET MILLSTONE FLAGS (RANDOM SIZES)
FEATURE STEPS IN STONEMARKET MILLSTONE
KITCHEN
LOUNGE
LOW LEVEL RAISED BED
0 METRES 5
1 2 3 4
Scale

DESIGN & LANDSCAPE CENTRE

AIM To transform a cabbage patch. For this we have to admit that we used the *Blue Peter*-style of 'here's one we did earlier', asking Design and Landscape Centre owner, Colin Elliot (who also contributes to Expert Gardener), to take us through one of his previous jobs.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Download a lengthy form from the site, which also includes a Want List (do you want a sandpit and compost bin as well as an herbaceous border, for instance) and a design brief checklist. You are also asked to supply photographs and sketches. The customers concerned kept their design brief, brief: 'Design a rear garden.' Fair enough. After discussion and, typically, a site visit, you receive a detailed CAD drawing and planting plan. You then decide whether to go for it, or not. In this case, they did, and you can see the results above and right.

OUR GARDENER SAID

'Difficult to criticise this – the layout is perfect and plants are a good mixture, which will keep the maintenance down. They've fully taken the customer's requirements into consideration. It's going to cost a lot of money but it'll be worth it – it's a lovely garden.'

PRACTICALS We're talking serious landscape design here, so cost and time will vary, especially if you get into site visits and consultations. The budget for this garden was a cool £25,000. Colin tries to respond to enquiries from the site within two days and will deliver an outline design in around a month.

PERFECT FOR The man in the picture on our opening spread, who owns an eyesore and has the dosh to get somebody to transform it for him.

www.garden-design.co.uk

Remind you of anywhere?

WHEN HOLLYWOOD MET THE WEB,

LET'S MAKE MOVIES

IT WAS A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

Cinema usherettes: get ready to pack your ice-cream trays away – Internet films are on their way...

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FILMS of the year was released on 5 May. But don't bother scanning the classifieds in your local paper for screening times – this particular flick can be viewed anywhere, anytime, without the need to queue for overpriced popcorn. If you want to stop the action and nip down the offie to restock your fridge, you can. And if you don't like it, you won't have to clamber over the rest of the audience to leave – you just shut your computer down.

The Quantum Project isn't a video or a made-for-tv monstrosity, it's an entirely new concept – an Internet movie. And not a 10-minute short made by a couple of screaming students with bedsheets over their heads, either: with a budget of $3 million, the sci-fi romance starring Stephen Dorff, Fay Masterson and John Cleese has the backing and the production values to give most Hollywood blockbusters a run for their money. 'The result will be indistinguishable from a big-screen film,' claims co-producer Barnet Bain, an Academy Award winner for his last flick, *What Dreams May Come*.

While such boasts have yet to be proved, there's no excuse for not finding out for yourself. With a PC and a half-decent connection, anyone can view the movie for a nominal fee, likely to be far less than the cost of a cinema ticket. Downloading will take time, it's true, but there's no limit on the number of times you can watch. The film

itself is hardly brainless Saturday afternoon fodder, either: billed as the tale of a physicist whose 'exploration of the quantum universe leads him on a collision course with life, destiny and true love,' this is high art in a high-tech environment, the stuff the Oscars were made for. Except, with no cinema release planned, it won't even qualify for an award, let alone receive one.

The Quantum Project will air on ***www.sightsound.com***, a film portal that financed the flick from Metafilmicks, Bain's company. They're unlikely to recoup anything more than a small fraction of their massive outlay, but Bain's rampant enthusiasm for both the Web and the film remains undiminished. 'I've wanted to make this film for many years, and I always wondered about the appropriate medium for it. The promise of the Web is absolute and certain; it's the most exciting development of the last century. We just wanted to explore the potential of it; it's about taking risks and exploring, like the dawn of the first talking movies.'

The acting community, says Bain, was fascinated with the concept ('John Cleese was the first actor on board, and he was very excited'), though studio bigwigs were slightly less enamoured, regarding the film as a gimmick. For such sceptics, Bain has a stark message: 'Basically, people who don't accept the Web won't stay in the business...'

IF HOLLYWOOD IS SLOW IN EMBRACING the possibilities of Internet distribution, in other areas there are clear signs that studios are waking up to both the possibilities and the threats posed by the Web. Every major director will drop a tech reference into interviews; many are actively embracing new technology by signing content deals with sites. Industry insiders claim most major studios have employees dedicated to entering chat rooms to hype their own company's film as a member of the public.

The astonishing success of *The Blair Witch Project*, which was initially publicised exclusively online, has led to a marked upturn in investment and creativity in official film sites. In part that's a reaction to the proliferation of unofficial sites dealing in gossip and speculation (*Phantom Menace* site theforce.net easily outpaced starwars.com and LucasFilm for news and content); it's also a recognition of the relatively cheap and far-reaching marketing the Web can provide.

Unless you're so determinedly arthouse that you don't actually care how many people see your work, it's now unfeasible to launch a new movie without a site. *The Matrix* was always likely to appeal to the Internet community, but ***www.whatisthematrix.com*** formed a remarkably integral part of the film's marketing; *The World Is Not Enough* (***www.jamesbond.com***) contained enough to keep any 007 fan occupied for hours; while *Sleepy Hollow* (***www.sleepyhollowmovie.com***) proved more spectacular (and, some might say, entertaining) than the actual movie, with a walk-through tour of the locations a particular highlight.

Across Hollywood the search is on for the kind of added value that keeps people coming back: behind-the-scenes snaps, trailers, interactive games. Visitors to the official site for shock-flick *American Psycho* (***www.americanpsycho.com***) can subscribe for a twice-daily email update, containing an 'e-quel' to the movie by author Bret Easton Ellis himself. Over 30,000 people have taken up the offer.

'Any other form of media – like a poster campaign – is quite fragmented, but on the

Sleepy Hollow: the site's better than the film, you know

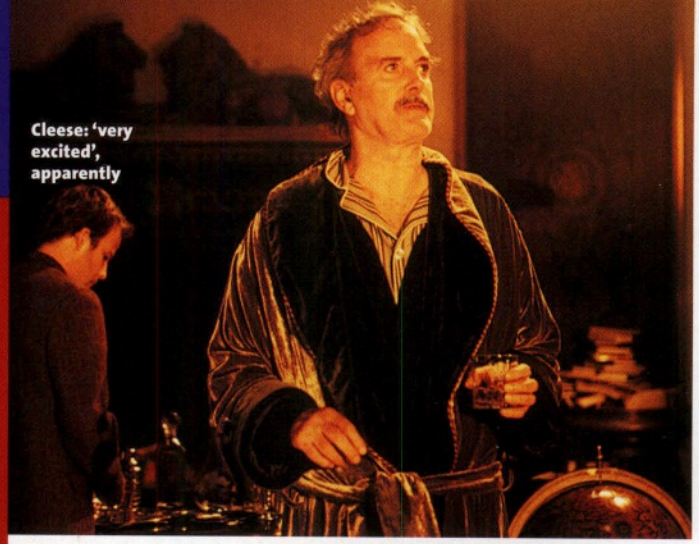
'IT'S A WRAP!'

Make your Net film a hit

- Build yourself a site with a snappy URL. Consider making a trailer which users can stream and pass round by email. Include some added extras to get people talking.

No tears for Gwyneth this year

- Submit your film to portal sites like *atomfilms.com* or *get outthere.bt.com*.
- Tell sites like *popcorn.co.uk* about your work.
- Encourage review sites to offer an opinion.
- Enter movie chat rooms on major portals like AOL and spread the word. Use newsgroups like *alt.movies*, *alt.cult-movies* or *rec.arts.movies.current-films*, too.
- Your film won't disappear if you keep it online – be patient. It might be discovered months down the line – keep plugging away.


Cleese: 'very excited', apparently

SITES & SOUNDS

URLs for the would-be film-maker

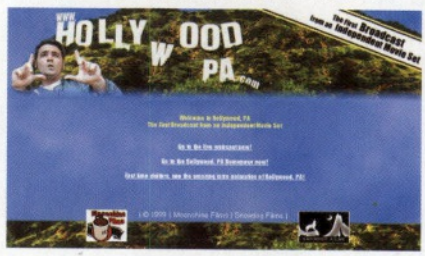
ATOM FILMS ***www.atomfilms.com***
Short films portal for amateurs.

CINEMANOW ***www.cinemanow.com***
Portal site for innovative new films.

CYBER FILM SCHOOL
www.cyberfilmschool.com
Advice and resources for the amateur director.

EDITORSNET ***www.editorsnet.com***
Advice and news on editing techniques. Daily updates.

HOLLYWOOD, PA ***www.hollywoodpa.com***
A daily Webcast from the set of an indie film.



IFILM ***www.ifilm.com***
Some of the best new film-makers on the Net.

INDIEFILMS ***www.indiefilms.com***
Find yourself the dosh to get your movie underway.

INTERNET FILMMAKER'S FAQ
www.filmmaking.net
Massive site; covers plot, technique and software.

INTERNET SCREENWRITERS NETWORK
www.screenwriters.com
Communities and chat rooms for screenwriters.

MAKING OF MOVIE
www.makingofmovie.com
Follow the making of new film *Radius* online.

MOVIEPITCH
www.moviepitch.com
Buy the CD, flog your script, retire on the proceeds. Simple.

NATIONAL FILM AND TELEVISION SCHOOL
www.nftsfilm-tv.ac.uk
Learn from the professionals.

REELSCREEN ***www.reelscreen.com***
Portal for independent British film-makers.

SCRIPTMAG ***www.scriptmag.com***
Includes online classes in screenwriting.

Unless you're determinedly arthouse, it's now unfeasible to launch a movie without a site

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY, MARSHALL JULIUS, ANDREW WOODS

Q&A ANNA FRIEL

The advance of the Internet into the film industry hasn't passed the acting profession by. A whole host of stars have now decided the best way to interact with their fans and keep them updated on new projects is to build their own official site. Among the Hollywood names using the Web to their advantage is Brit favourite Anna Friel, whose site (***www.netshop.co.uk/annafriel***) has just been relaunched to include extra multimedia, pictures and information. *the net* caught up with Anna to ask her about the site and her favourite Web things...

'I've spent a lot of time with the design company – I hope you like the results'

What are you up to at the moment?
I've just completed filming *Everlasting Piece* in Dublin. I'm off to Canada now to start shooting *War Bride* with Brenda Fricker, and I'm also looking at two new film projects.

What do you like and dislike about the Web?
I like the ability to communicate instantly – anything from a two-line email to whole documents – and of course the info sites are very useful. Booking online is great as well – it saves time and money. Most importantly, it provides a platform where I can say how things really are (for example, how some of the press work – they buy a picture and then invent or extrapolate a story to go with it, hoping for a response).

I dislike the growing tendency for overcrowded and hard-to-navigate sites – especially the ones which send you to another URL which has little to do with your original search. It's often another excuse to get you to pay for something which you might not need.

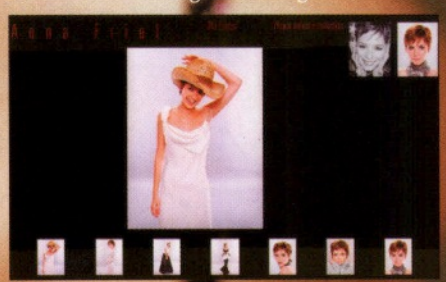
I'm getting fed up with auto-responders and spam, but I suppose that's just a part of cyber life. I also don't like the fact that two people have already used ***www.annafriel.com*** and I'm finding it hard to get hold of...

What do you use the Web for?
It's nice to see what's going on in the film world and who's doing what. However, producers and directors, etc, deal through my agents, not on the Net. It's good to keep in touch with fans and answer FAQs, and to provide info on up-coming events and agency contact details, too.

What do you think of the way the film industry uses the Web?
Films (even the small art-house ones) represent a huge investment – so it would be foolish not to use the Net as a means of promoting the latest releases. In that respect the Web is another marketing tool, like ads on television – but more informative and often interactive. *The Blair Witch Project* is a perfect example of how the Internet can propel a small independent project into the stratosphere. While I'm sure it wasn't a one-off – look at *The Matrix*, now a cyber cult – I don't think the Net poses a threat to the big studios; rather it complements another branch of the industry and allows deserving projects a much bigger platform than would otherwise be possible.

How much involvement do you have in your site?
While I can't do HTML or Flash, I like to be involved in the feel and style of the site. The old one was looking very outdated, and I've been busy, so it was getting hard to update. So rather than do that, we've decided to go for a brand new site. I've spent a lot of time with the design company and I hope you like the results. Having a site means I have to stay on top of what's happening in cyberland – otherwise I just might not make time to be involved. In short, it keeps me on my toes.

What plans do you have for the site?
There are some great designers out there who have done some really nice 'Anna' sites. I'd love to put some of their work up – so if they get in touch, we'll try to arrange something. Also, I want to promote some of the charity causes I'm asked to help, either by putting on a link or a logo – just something to help draw attention to the great unpaid work that so many people do.



IT'S MY CHOICE

more music Supported by thomson-music.com you'll have access to thousands of free tracks, software upgrades and the latest music news. Fully upgradeable so you won't be left behind by new digital formats. **more memory** 64mb CompactFlash memory card holds up to 2 hrs of digital quality audio. Store 10 x as much with an additional CompactFlash card. **more formats** Plays MP3 and RealAudio G2. **more stuff** Everything you need to download and transfer digital music files: CompactFlash memory card, CompactFlash reader/writer, Realjukebox™ music management software, headphones, cables and batteries. **more rugged** Lyra has no moving parts so it's completely skip-free **more personal** Create your own music library by downloading digital audio files or converting your cd or md collection.

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Web you can have everything under one roof,' says Lisa Heyes, head of UK marketing at Film Four, whose recent sites have included ***www.eastiseast.co.uk*** and ***www.ghostdog.co.uk***. 'The Web is no longer a specialist media, it's part of everyday life. The problem is you don't know if you're reaching your core audience, like you do with cinema advertising. You also have to let people know the site's there in the first place.' Heyes estimates the cost of an average film site at around £20,000 – roughly the same as putting a trailer together.

Merciless marketing is, of course, only one side of the cyber-film revolution. If the Web was designed to break down the barriers between the amateur and professional, nowhere is that more evident than in film-making. There are over 30 sites offering collections of short films to download, and scores more individual film sites.

Neither is *The Quantum Project* the first full-length feature to be posted online (it's just the first full-budget production). That honour goes to *Monster Home* (***www.monsterhome.com***), a low-budget family drama from independent Canadian production company Image Business, which premiered last year. 'As an independent film-maker, the process of getting distributed is very frustrating,' says co-producer Geoffrey Shea. 'You've got a small audience and they're very dispersed, so it's impractical. On the Web, if there are 8000 people around the world interested in your film, you can reach them in one go.'

Monster Home cost $100,000 to make, but Shea's team were forced to cut down on the number of complicated camera techniques they could use due to the negative impact on bandwidth – a consideration *The Quantum Project*'s creators have chosen to ignore. The film is split into 76 scenes, with users choosing different routes to the same ending, watching an average of 40 scenes each. Shea estimates downloads to be 'in the hundreds of thousands' – and he's got his own message for the movie moguls: 'Hollywood should be worried because their product is so poor. Ninety percent is sub-standard, and the Web will enable me to get to the films that aren't. We're just waiting for the first paradigm-changing Net movie, which will reshape the whole landscape.'

'The Web is no longer a specialist media; it's part of everyday life'

At present, the majority of Internet films are some way from that dream: shot on digital cameras or on traditional 16mm film and digitised, they are often low on effects (and length, with an average of around 10 minutes) but high on the kind of enthusiasm that made *Blair Witch* such a sensation. The majority of producers are film students or keen amateurs like Edinburgh-based barman Duncan Nicholl, whose short film *Horsehair* can be viewed on BT's getoutthere (***www.getoutthere.bt.com***), a portal site dedicated to showcasing unsigned film and music talent.

In its first six weeks, *Horsehair* – a macabre tale of a man who is literally consumed by his favourite chair – was seen by over 400 people, far more than viewed it on a tour of small film festivals last year. 'I thought it had come to the end of its natural life,' confesses Nicholl. 'The Net has been

'THEY CAN'T DO THAT!'

Directors might love the Web, but that doesn't mean they always get it right in their movies...

PRETTY IN PINK (1986)

Just think: if it wasn't for a prehistoric version of email, the relationship between Blane (Andrew McCarthy) and Andie (Molly Ringwold) might never have been realised. For in an attempt to woo his pink-clad crush, Blane sends an email with photo attachment (of himself) to Andie, obliviously tapping away on the other side of the computer lab. Not only is it sent something like ten years before schools (and indeed most of society) ever got a sniff of the technology, but it also arrives instantly at a machine that has no specific address, never mind a connection to a server.

THE NET (1995)

For a film based around and indeed named *The Net*, this possesses one particular weakness: a complete disregard for technological detail. As panicked Angela Bennett (Sandra Bullock) furiously types away in an attempt to uncover the usual conspiracy beloved of the Yanks, she's oblivious to the fact that she's using illegal email addresses on a Mac no virus would be able to infect in the first place.

COPYCAT (1995)

Criminal psychologist Helen Hudson (Sigourney Weaver) is on the trail of a serial killer who, like the contestants of *Stars In Their Eyes*, mimics the murder techniques of his heroes. The Internet comes in handy for Helen as she surfs the Web in search of her monster (Harry Connick Jr). Then she gets a lead: an eerie email that instantaneously – and impossibly – runs a macro on her machine. Sigs then duly replies to this 'anonymous' message.

Molly waited patiently for Sandra's email

DOUBLE JEOPARDY (1999)

Angry woman falsely imprisoned seeks revenge on her husband (the real killer) as she's released on probation. But how will she find him when he's obviously had a history of ritually changing his name after the string of killings? Via the Internet, of course! Although Libby Parsons (Ashley Judd) has missed out on the Web revolution while in the clink, it takes but minutes of tuition to get on hubbie's trail. So Judd enters his name, Nick (that's right, Nicholas Parsons), flicks through a few pages of text, and bingo! She's tracked him down, changed name and all. Were life that easy...

PICTURES: ASSOCIATED PRESS; IMAGE NET; KOBAL ALAN STRUTT/SIGMA; ILLUSTRATIONS: MICHAEL KOELSCH

great for us. People who go to film festivals tend to be real film fans, or friends and family of the people who made the film, but this opens it up to a far more diverse public.'

If Hollywood isn't exactly quaking in its boots, it certainly hasn't ignored the quiet revolution taking place. This month sees the launch of ***www.nibblebox.com***, in which a number of big-name directors – including Doug Liman (*Swingers*, *Go*) and *Out Of Sight*'s Steven Soderbergh – will 'mentor' film-makers and showcase their work. *Leaving Las Vegas* director Mike Figgis put the production process of his new film *Time Code* (***www.timecode2000.com***) online, with footage of shooting, plus diaries from the stars. Most amazing of all, ***www.moviepitch.com*** – a site which lets screenwriters pitch their ideas to moguls for a small fee – is celebrating its first big success, with an Arkansas grandmother's script about a recluse living inside the Statue of Liberty in production with a major studio. The Hollywood dream, it seems, is alive and well in cyberspace.

There's never been a better time to make a movie

STILL DOUBT THE POWER OF WEB movies? Consider it the preserve of film buffs with too much time and too fast a connection? Think again. A recent survey of Net users found 63 percent would be 'very interested' in downloading movies. With the advent of Web TV, the Net will become a vast database of films, both renowned and unknown, doing away with scheduling. As bandwidth on ordinary PC connections increases, the current scepticism with which many view the grainy world of Web films will disappear. It'll come at a price, though: inevitably, commercial forces will start charging for what's currently free.

Blair Witch: mega success

And Hollywood won't be able to afford to be left out. The inaugural Yahoo! Online Film Festival (***www.onlinefilmfestival.com***), held in LA in March, saw a scramble by studios to snap up new talent, as previously reluctant executives were swayed by the Web's best.

Barnet Bain certainly believes the future is digital: 'There are no excuses – if you want to make a film, you can do it without any financial hurdles. There's never been a better time.' So what are you waiting for?

HOLLYWOOD'S NUMBER ONE TARGET

Fast approaching 30, he still lives at home with his dad. He sleeps through most of the day and weighs in excess of 300 lbs. His name is Harry Knowles. He is King of the Freaks.

He is also the most powerful film critic in the world. 'Friend' to many of the brightest stars and filmmakers in Hollywood. A man capable of torpedoing a movie from his bedroom, the nerve centre of his entire operation, and seeing it sink without trace, unseen by the public. *His* public. For, as founding father of ***aint-it-cool-news.com***, a pioneering Internet film review and gossip site, Harry is currently hit more than a million times a day.

Harry Knowles: feared

Working unseen, far from the 'biz' in Austin, Texas, Knowles spends his waking hours attending screenings, writing reviews and collating gossip from a vast spy network. Yet only five years ago, he was selling collectibles at garage sales. Then fate stepped in, tripping his 'elephantine buttocks' and crushing him under 1200 lbs of toys and comics. A lengthy convalescence followed, during which Harry fought depression by knocking together an online collection of reviews and gossip, which soon caught on.

'What I tend to write are film reviews that are particular to me,' explains the man himself. 'I write in a very personal style. I don't think I'm superior to anyone; when I read other critics, I'm like, "Wow, they're really good." I just try to be as real and honest as possible, and for whatever reason, that appeals to the public.'

A quick poll of London critics found that while Knowles' work is not particularly admired in the business, his success certainly is; though many added that if anyone should have that much influence, it should be them, not Harry – who feels personally that 'making it big is no big deal.'

Only five years ago Knowles was selling collectibles at garage sales

'I try not to think about what the site can do in terms of power,' he stresses. 'I just act as though I'm in a void. I write the site like I'm doing it for five or six of my friends. Trying to think of it in any other terms would lead to your own destruction.'

Be that as it may, Harry has, on occasion, strayed from the void, acknowledging his wider audience and attempting to pull some serious Hollywood strings. A couple of years ago, for example, he dared Miramax chief Harvey Weinstein to produce Peter Jackson's upcoming *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Despite strong budget reservations, Weinstein eventually gave the project a green light, denying, however, that it was Harry's cajoling that made him change his mind.

'Harry Knowles has pretty good instincts, but the idea of an outsider making our decisions for us is ridiculous,' comments an anonymous industry insider. 'What Harry does is generate a buzz, sometimes positive, sometimes negative, spreading word on a movie that can affect how it does. And he knows a lot of people. They send him, expenses paid, to festivals. Some do it out of respect. Others out of fear. The rest just leave him alone.'

Harry argues that it is respect, not fear, that works for him, citing positive relationships with the likes of Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez, who gave him a cameo in horror flick *The Faculty*.

'I visited the *Fail Safe* set; I was invited by George Clooney. George respects me because I don't deal in personal gossip. If he was caught with a 14-year old somewhere I'd never write about it. What interests me is his film work, and he knows that.'

On the whole, though, Harry prefers to keep his distance from the rich and shameless, in order to keep an open mind.

'When I find out that someone might be argumentative, I tend not to visit those sets, because I don't want to have a negative experience with someone that will colour the way I look at their films.'

Imitated by sites too numerous to mention, Ain't It Cool News may not be great-looking, but its influence remains second-to-none. Face-to-face, Knowles is just another eager fan. Online, however, he is a fearless force to be reckoned with. Well, almost.

'Salma Hayek scares me,' he admits, 'because she's beautiful. But that's it. Everyone else is fair game. Even when I meet studio heads I don't get intimidated because they're just people, and quite honestly, they're people who don't know movies as well as I do.'

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'HERE'S ONE I MADE EARLIER...'

Creating a video masterpiece in your own bedroom is still a far-off dream, but with the right kit and some decent advice, it's possible to add a professional touch to your efforts.

Simon Hilton, a film director at The Artists Company in London, was responsible for Stephen Gately's debut solo music video *New Beginning*, released at the end of this month. The promo sees Gately in a variety of London locations, which change from black and white, through individual colours, into full colour. Hilton,

who has also directed videos for Robbie Williams, explained how to improve your film-making:

'First, come up with a great idea. Next, beg, borrow or steal a digital camera. Experiment with it. The lightweight aspect of DV allows more flexibility than a large camera.

'When you've shot your footage, you come to the editing. From a novice's point of view, iMovie (which comes with the new iMac) is fantastic. It allows you to cut pictures together and add sound effects. The next step up is Final Cut Pro. This is an exciting piece of software that can be used at a more professional level.

'Build up slowly; only buy things as you need them'

'For altering the look of pictures, Adobe After Effects is like Photoshop for moving images. Some of the effects in Stephen's video are achievable in After Effects.

'Most of what you edit at present wouldn't be of a high-enough pixel resolution to be shown commercially, but is a great way to learn. If you want to broadcast your images, I'd recommend a G3 or G4 with a video board. Build up equipment slowly, though, and only buy things as you need them.'

THE SOFTWARE YOU'LL WANT:
ADOBE AFTER EFFECTS *www.adobe.com*
FINAL CUT PRO *www.apple.com/finalcutpro/*
IMOVIE *www.apple.com/imovie/*
MEDIA STUDIO PRO *www.ulead.com*

WORDS: VICTORIA WILLIAMS, ROBERT JEFFERY; PICTURES: NICK WRIGHT

CANON MV20
£700 ★★★

This model allows you to start getting a little more adventurous with your filming, with slightly higher specifications and eight different auto-exposure programs for specific lighting situations. These include ones for filming in very bright conditions (on the beach or in the snow, for instance) and for when the light source is particularly concentrated (a spotlight on stage). The design of the camcorder is vertical, so it looks very stylish. However, the shape doesn't fit easily in the hand, which means the zoom is operated by the thumb rather than the more dextrous forefingers. This makes the camera less easy to use than the others on test.

SHOOT TO THRILL

The choice of digital camcorder can be a confusing one. Whether you're uploading a magnum opus onto the Net, or emailing family footage to friends overseas, how do you select the right camera? On the whole you get what you pay for, with higher picture resolution, more powerful zooms and snazzier effects at the top end of the market. *The net* has taken a look at various cameras as a guide to features you might want to consider. One tip – getting impressive footage takes practice, so if you want a camcorder to cover a special event, buy well in advance and really get to grips with it before the big day. Quoted prices were best available Web prices at time of going to press.

SHARP INTERNET VIEWCAM £450
★★★

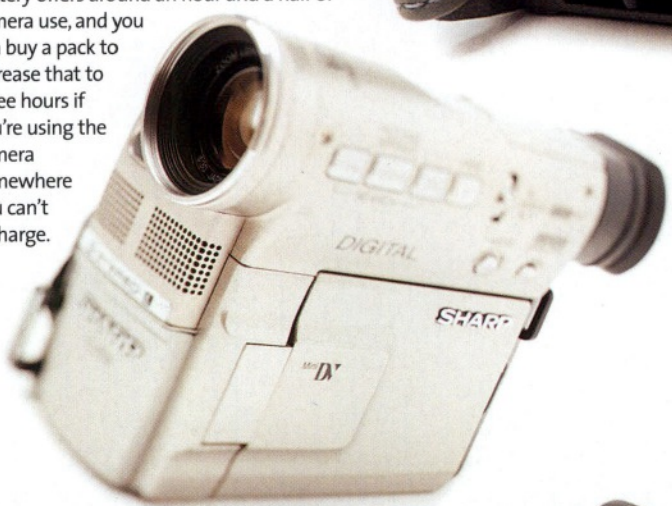
Not a digital camcorder in the same vein as the others we looked at, but a wonderful solution to the problem of massive file sizes when sending video over the Internet. This teeny-weeny camera (about half the size of even the smallest camcorder) records video and audio in MPEG-4 format, so it can be uploaded with very little fuss. Obviously the resultant picture quality is nothing like as sharp as with the MiniDV cameras, but for people who want to email video simply for information purposes, this could well be the answer. It comes complete with a floppy disc adaptor and Pixlab Media software.

PANASONIC NV-DS11 £650 ★★★★

One of Panasonic's entry-level cameras, and a doddle to set up and get going. It has a long-play mode which can get two hours of footage onto an 80-minute Mini DV tape, as well as 11 different special effects that you can add during recording or, more conveniently, during playback. For a groovy 60s *Get Carter* look, check out the horizontal wipes. Beginners' nerves are soothed with an image stabiliser which suppresses camera-shake, and a PC connection kit is available for those who want to edit footage on their computer. It's not the smallest digital camcorder on the market, but a good all-round model with easy-to-operate controls and a lot to occupy the amateur or semi-professional filmmaker.

SHARP VL-PD3H £900 ★★★★

A high-quality camcorder with tip-top resolution and simple to master controls. The on-screen menu is particularly easy to find your way around, offering the user a great deal of flexibility in recording and playback. A little conventional camera knowledge will help get the best results from this model; however, it's not essential, as the manual carefully explains advanced features, such as manually altering the shutter speed to achieve a bleached-out effect. A fully charged battery offers around an hour and a half of camera use, and you can buy a pack to increase that to three hours if you're using the camera somewhere you can't recharge.



JVC DVL100 £700 ★★★★

Aimed at people who are new to digital camcorders, the JVC has a number of interesting features, including wipes and fades that are simple to add, and a built-in Auto Light to help when the light falls. It's compact, but also feels less solid than the others. However, the accessible positioning of the zoom and snapshot function (great if you're after a *Thelma And Louise* freeze-frame ending) means there's less camera wobble. Even if you do have the shakes, JVC's picture stabiliser claims to self-adjust to match your personal tics and eliminate picture jiggle.

PANASONIC NV-DS35B £920 ★★★★★

A compact camera with impressive features and extraordinary resolution. It performs brilliantly in low-light situations, and fits snugly into even the smallest hand. The black and white/sepia options give plenty of scope if you're planning a homage to film noir. The speedy zoom is incredibly smooth – but do be careful, as a slightly too heavy touch will have you gazing up your subject's nostril in half a second. Not cheap, but you get an awful lot for your money.

Cantrall, Illinois,
9 May 1995

NATURE ON THE WARPATH

Earthquakes, hurricanes and volcanoes might be strangers to our green and pleasant land, but thanks to the Net you can see them bringing misery to thousands of foreigners!

On 17 March this year, iceberg B15, the largest ever recorded (almost two-and-half-times the size of Kent), fell away from the Antarctic ice sheet and set sail for God-knows-where, with little brother B16 in tow. A few days later another oversized ice-cube made a break for it, so now B15, B16 and B17 are all loose somewhere in the southern Pacific.

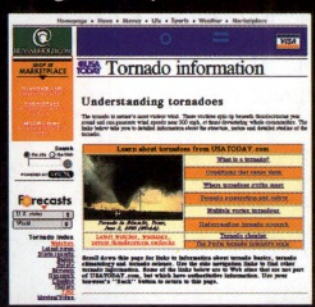
This isn't the only worrying item of recent weather news. In Japan, a volcano has forced 13,000 people on the island of Hokkaido to wear prescription goggles – with experts predicting a bigger eruption to come. Mozambique is still recovering from devastating floods, and in Mongolia a longer-than-expected spell of brass monkey weather has killed 1.5 millon livestock. Meanwhile, our very own Met Office is happy to go on record to say there'll probably be more tornadoes here. The good news is that Bracknell is the first target; the bad news is that Britain has more twisters per square

TORNADOES

HOW DO THEY WORK? The basics are simple: thunderstorms contain rising swells of warm, moist air; as these swells move, they rotate – sometimes ferociously enough to become a funnel cloud, or tornado. Most twisters only form in intense weather systems when there's the right (ie, wrong) combination of warm swells, a stable layer of air and a cool, dry zone. Higher than average temperatures normally mean more thunderstorms, and therefore more tornadoes. And it's not just Yank trailer parks that attract these windy columns: twisters have rearranged roof slates in Birmingham and Bracknell. A chap called Colin at the Met Office told *the net* that in this country tornadoes are reported 11 days a year.

HOW DANGEROUS ARE THEY? The easiest way to tell if the storm that just blew through your town was a real twister is to look for plucked chickens. Serious tornadoes aren't happy with killing people and rearranging property – there's hard scientific evidence to prove that they're not happy until every fowl in the area has had its feathers removed.

The most destructive single tornado in recent history killed 689 people in Indiana. Twisters with winds of 143mph and higher can even turn straw into deadly spears, hurling the cereal crop with enough force to pierce walls.



WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE? The *USA Today* site (*www.usatoday.com/weather/tornado/wtwisto.htm*). Alternatively, if you live in Bracknell and are worried about the Big One, log on to the Tornado and Storm Research Organisation (*www.torro.org.uk*).

Camilla, Georgia, 14 February 2000

Wrong, wrong, wrong...

Those chunks of Antarctica that have broken off are actually extremely bad news

metre than any other country in the world.

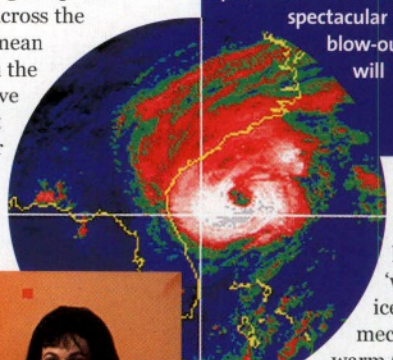
If this all seems a wee bit depressing, just give thanks you're not living in California, which, according to your choice of expert, will soon be struck down by a quake, volcano, tsunami – or its own bad taste.

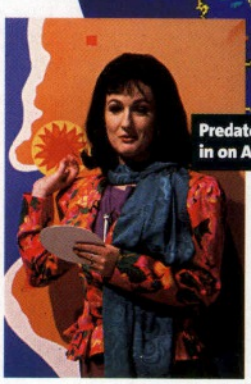
It's easy to blame all this chaotic weather on global warming. Even though you'll still find cynics who say there's no scientific proof for the greenhouse effect (***www.skepticism.net/global_warming/index.html***), there's no easy alternative explanation for the fact that the 90s was the warmest decade since records began, and 1999 was the 21st consecutive year of above-average temperatures.

To add to this confusion there is El Nino, memorably described as a giant puddle of warm water that sloshes across the Pacific (and by giant, we mean half as big as America). In the States, recent El Ninos have kept winters so warm that 1999 was a record year for forest fires.

And those chunks of Antarctica that have just broken off are seriously bad news. Especially for the Dutch who, if sea levels continue to soar, will see about half their land sink beneath the waves.

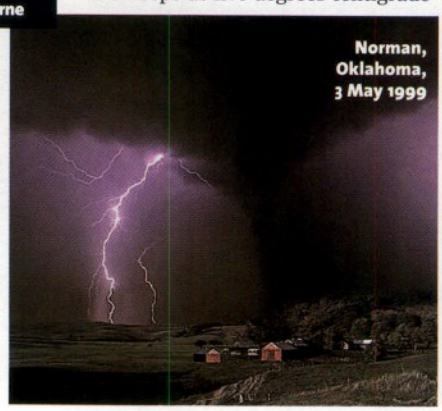
The danger doesn't just lie in what the weather can do to us – it's also how it makes us behave towards each other. In New York in 1998, when the mercury never dipped below an average 90 degrees for 32 days, the murder rate rose by 75 percent. So if Jack Straw really wants to solve the crime problem, all he has to do is turn Britain into one great big fridge.




Predator zeroed in on Aherne

Perversely, that's what some pundits say will happen with global 'warming'. As the Arctic icecap melts, it disturbs the mechanism that brings a warm Gulf Stream off our coast and keeps us five degrees centigrade warmer than we ought to be at this latitude. In the UK we're actually as far north as the Canadian province of Newfoundland, which is the kind of place where wolves kill sheep not for their meat, but for their wool.

Hollywood has yet to make a movie about global warming, preferring instead to terrify us with a large space rock blasting the world to smithereens. The odds of this are authoritatively estimated at ten million to one; there's more chance of Hartlepool United winning the European Champions Cup. But be warned: the world's greatest mass extinction happened 350 million years ago when, possibly due to another asteroid with no sense of direction, the planet got so hot that 95 percent of all species fried to death. So when your beautiful lawn turns yellow in summer, record-breaking winds whip off your slates and your favourite hotel slides into the sea, bear this in mind: when it comes to the weather, there's always someone worse off than you.


Norman, Oklahoma, 3 May 1999

LIVING DANGEROUSLY

Five places where the estate agents need all the help they can get

HAWAII

Half of the main island is accounted for by one active volcano, Mauna Loa, but it's neighbour Kilauea that's causing concern – it's been sliding into the sea by about 10 centimetres a year since 1975, and erupting, in a polite kind of way, since 1983. The fear is that if Kilauea erupts properly, one side of it will blow away and a chunk of rock roughly the size of New York will fall into the sea. Cue tsunamis, and an enormous gurgling sound as main island slides underwater, creating a crisis even Steve McGarrett couldn't solve.
www.hawaiis.com

NAPLES

If Vesuvius erupted today, as many as a million people in and around Naples could die within 15 minutes. Vesuvius hasn't had a blockbuster eruption since 1631 and, although no one can predict when the next spectacular blow-out will occur, one British academic says another full-scale eruption is 'now overdue'.
www.rcm.napoli.it

Soon Hull could become northern England's answer to Atlantis

SAN FRANCISCO

New studies by the US Geological Survey say there's a 70 percent chance of a major earthquake between now and 2030. By 'major' they mean at least 6.7 on the Richter scale, which is the size of the quake that killed 57 people in Northridge, California in 1994, causing some $20 billion worth of damage. And by the way: the Northridge quake could have killed thousands if it hadn't struck in the small hours of the morning.
www.washburnqreal estate.com

ALASKA

Temperatures in this snowy land are rising three times as fast as in the rest of the Arctic. So what's wrong with that? Well, Alaska is never going to be warm enough to become a suntrap, but the permafrost is already melting – triggering 2000 landslides across the state and creating hundreds of holes in all the wrong places – like the middle of the road. If temperatures keep soaring, Alaska will end up with more holes than Rab C Nesbitt's collection of string vests.
www.alaskareal estate.com

HULL

If the West Antarctic ice sheet melts leading to a rise in sea levels of about 17ft, the home of the Tigers, the City and that academic who was recently alleged to have been spying for the Commies could become the north of England's answer to Atlantis.
www.garness-jones.co.uk

Hull: drowning

Naples: doomed

WORDS: PAUL SIMPSON; PICTURES: CORBIS, EMPICS, HULTON GETTY, PA

Kobe, Japan,
17 January 1995

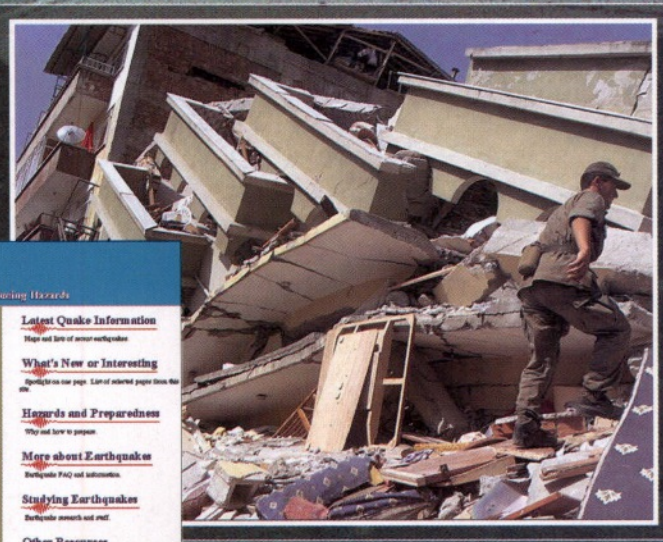
EARTHQUAKES

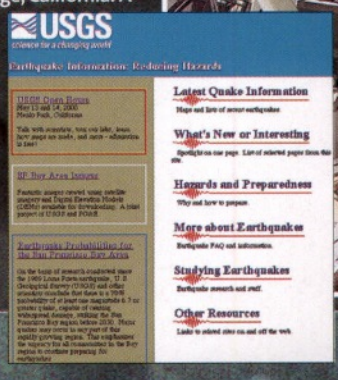
HOW DO THEY WORK? When pressure in the planet's crust pushes the sides of its tectonic plates together, stress builds until the rocks slip, releasing waves of energy and making the earth, erm, quake. Although scientists know how quakes occur, no one has successfully predicted when they will happen.

HOW DANGEROUS ARE THEY? Earthquake science has become more complex since geologists discovered a new type of fault, known as the thrust fault, which helped trigger a $20 billion earthquake in Northridge, California. A peak-time quake in California would probably cause $1 trillion of damage, which in turn could trigger a global recession.

The good news is that Britain is nowhere near a major fault line. Most of the million quakes which shake the Earth every year are too small to detect, but the US Geological Society 'expects' 18 major earthquakes and one massive one (above eight on the Richter scale) each year.

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE? Best place to start is the US Geological Society's site (*quake.wr.usgs.gov*). But if you'd like to wait for the big one to strike on the San Andreas, try *www.discovery.com/exp/earthquakes/earthquakes.html*.





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whatever you say... sayitnow.co.uk

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VOLCANOES

HOW DO THEY WORK? Most volcanoes erupt when hot stuff called magma finds a weak spot in the Earth's crust. They are often found on the edges of the great tectonic plates (see quakes) which, as they rub together, create molten rock or magma which is pushed to the surface. Yet each volcano has its own 'personality', and all can erupt differently.

HOW DANGEROUS ARE THEY? The Krakatoa explosion in 1883 blocked out the sun for 24 hours, covered ships with ash 6000km away and triggered a tsunami so powerful it destroyed 165 coastal villages, leaving many harbours in the area blocked by human corpses. For the next year, rafts of pumice so thick a man could stand on them floated across the Indian Ocean, and the dust and fumes from the eruption circled the equator for 13 days, turning the sun blue. In other words, pretty dangerous.

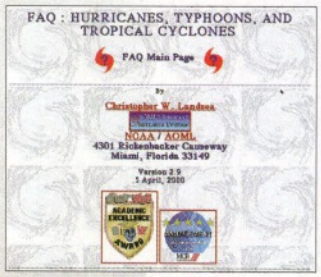
Modern population pressure means than half a billion people now live within killing distance of one of the world's 1511 volcanos, only ten percent of which are monitored for activity. One vulcanologist has predicted: 'A volcano will kill a million people in my lifetime.'

When Krakatoa exploded, it covered ships 6000km away with ash

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE? Volcano World (*volcano.und.nodak.edu*) is your best gateway to all things erupting online. You can get thumbnail details on any volcano around the world and pore over the 'Ask A Vulcanologist' archive. One questioner asks: 'Are volcanoes good places to dump nuclear waste?' As an American academic points out, while it's nice to chuck glowing radioactive waste out of sight, chucking things *back* is what volcanoes are good at.

Mayon Volcano, Phillipines, 23 September 1984

HURRICANES


FAQ : HURRICANES, TYPHOONS, AND TROPICAL CYCLONES

FAQ Main Page

by

Christopher W. Landsea

NOAA / AOML

4301 Rickenbacker Causeway

Miami, Florida 33149

Version 2.9

1 April, 2010

HOW DO THEY WORK? These roaring vortices of wind are created from the oceans' heat, which is why they normally form in the tropics. Officially a storm becomes a hurricane when cyclonic winds reach 74mph. The word hurricane comes from Hurican, a Caribbean god of evil.

HOW DANGEROUS ARE THEY? Put it this way: the Central American republic of Belize moved its capital 50 miles inland after the old city was almost destroyed by a tidal wave generated by Hurricane Hattie in 1961. In 1900, a 170kmh hurricane struck Galveston, Texas, killing as many as 12,000 rednecks. Every year hurricanes cause billions of dollars of damage, especially on the East Coast of the US.

Elsewhere, they are known as cyclones – but are just as destructive. One hurricane in 1274 (christened Kamikaze – 'divine wind' – by the grateful Japanese) trashed the fleet of Kubla Khan, which had been poised to invade the home islands.

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE? Nature's greatest storms are lovingly detailed at ***hurricanes.noaa.gov***, which also links to a good FAQ on hurricanes, cyclones and tornadoes on ***www.aoml.noaa.gov/hrd/tcfaq/tcfaqHED.html***. If you want to know just how much fun you can have piloting a plane into one, try flying the virtual mission on the Hurricane Hunters site at ***www.hurricanehunters.com***. But be warned: you don't get any serious virtual thrills until about 20 clicks in.

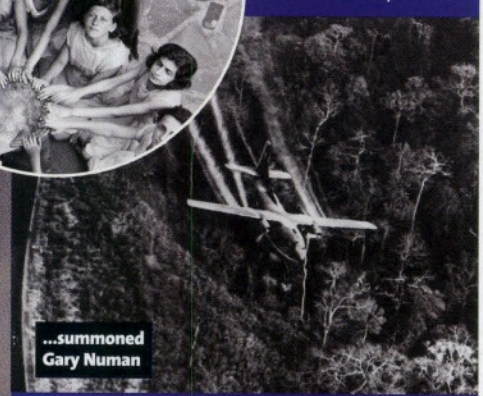
Hurricane Floyd, Atlantic City, 17 September 1999

The word hurricane comes from Hurican, a Caribbean god of evil

WEATHER WAR

Mankind's attempts to control the weather didn't begin and end with the rain dance. In the late 60s, when the US Army's away fixture in Vietnam was not going to their liking, American pilots were sent 'up country' to douse clouds with silver iodine in a largely futile bid to turn the Ho Chi Minh trail to mud. It was supposed to increase rain in clouds by chilling the cloud droplets so they fell out as raindrops. Good try – but a bucketful of chemicals failed to stop Charlie slipping supplies and troops into South Vietnam.

The rain dance...



...summoned Gary Numan

But despite that setback, cloud seeding is now being tested in Mexico, South Africa, Thailand and the dry bits of the American West. Supporters claim increases in rainfall of 10 to 15 percent – but critics always counter this by asking: 'How do you know how much it would have rained anyway?'.

But 40 years of mixed reports have not deterred the US Air Force. There's a United Nations agreement banning hostile 'environmental modification', but has anyone told the USAF? In a document entitled Weather As A Force Multiplier: Owning The Weather in 2025 (***au/2025/volume3/chap15/v3cl5-1.htm***), the USAF envisages sending unmanned cloud-seeding planes into Colombia to loose thunderstorms on the drug cartels' planes. The report says, in the usual chilling military language: 'A global, precise, real-time, robust, weather-modification capability would provide war-fighting CINCs [Commander in Chiefs] with a powerful force multiplier to achieve military objectives. Since weather will be common to all possible futures, a weather-modification capability would have utility across the entire spectrum of conflict.'

The USAF might be convinced, but to scientists it all sounds a bit *X-Files*. And those looking for further proof that life imitates not art but bad sci-fi could do a lot worse than log on to ***www.energialtd.com/znamya.htm***, the home page for the Russian consortium which still hopes to send giant mirrors into space to bathe the coldest parts of Siberia in reflected sunlight. These reflectors would be cumulatively ten times as bright as the moon.

Luckily, the Russians have so far found better things to spend their money on. Like vodka....

.it

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AMERICA
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www.america.is.it

...the future

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wwwhere.everything.is.it

TSUNAMIS

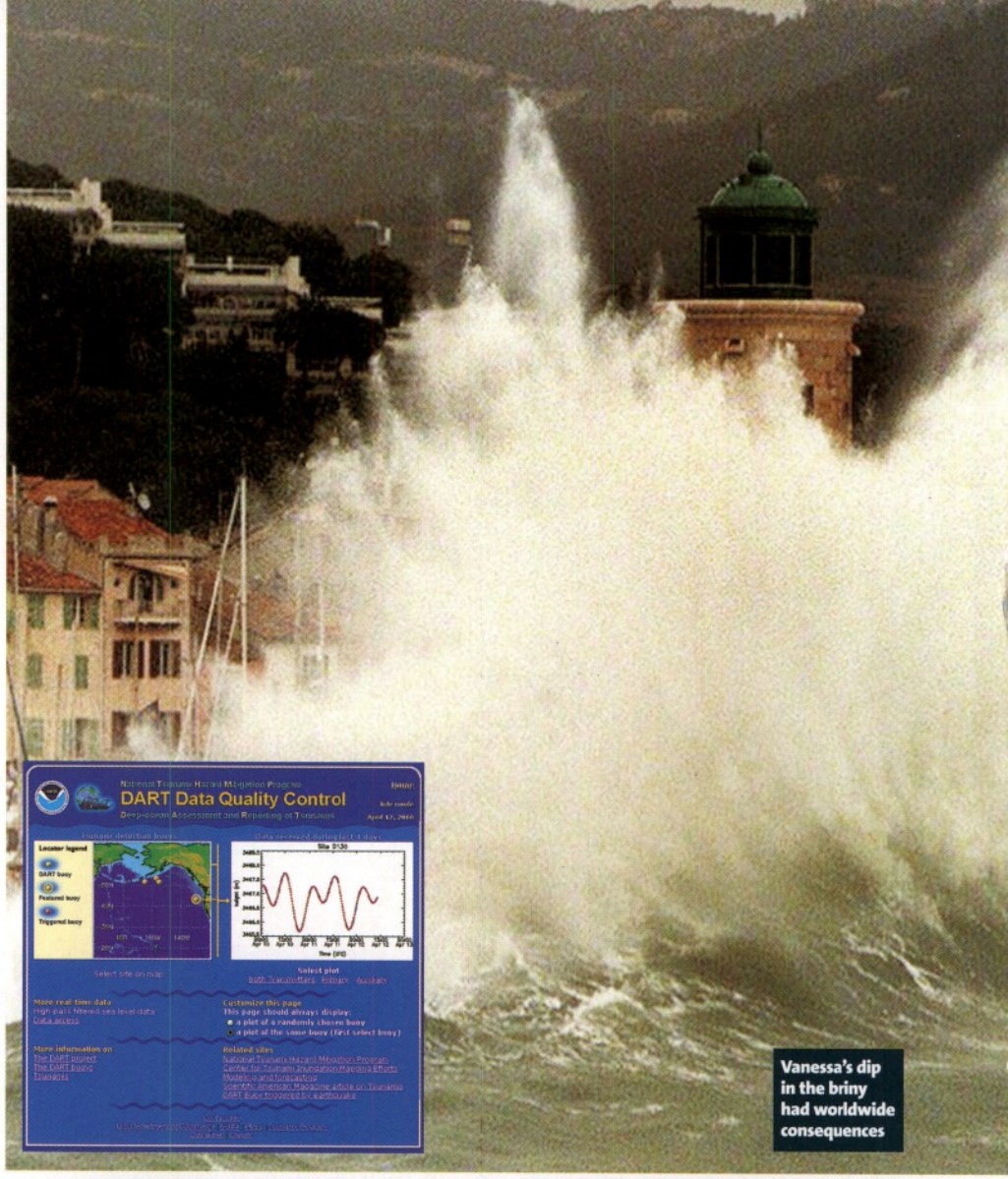
HOW DO THEY WORK? Not to be confused with Toon Army or tidal waves, these deadly swells are usually triggered by an undersea earthquake or a seabed volcano erupting. In a way that scientists still don't fully understand, this disturbance sculpts the sea's surface into that distinctive tsunami shape. The resulting wave travels faster than a Boeing 747 at around 15m high... until it hits land.

A tsunami travels faster than a Boeing 747, at around 15m high

HOW DANGEROUS ARE THEY? In July 1998, the tsunami that struck Papua New Guinea killed 2000 people and impaled countless others on broken mangrove branches. Almost nine out of ten tsunamis occur in the Pacific, which is cursed with the most undersea earthquakes.

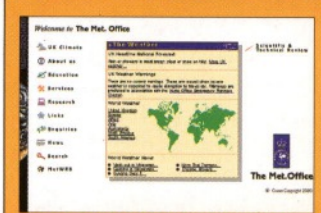
This is good news for Brits, but not for Californians. Latest evidence suggests that every 300 to 700 years a large earthquake off the US West Coast creates a tsunami, meaning that by the law of averages the Golden State can expect to get very wet within a couple of centuries. The tsunami produced by Krakatoa was as high as a 12-storey building, and killed 30,000 people.

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE? The best analysis is to be found at *Scientific American*'s site: ***www.sciam.com/1999/0599gonzalez.html***. Or log on to ***tsunami.pmel.noaa.gov/dartqc/WaveWatcher***, where you can get realtime sea-level data straight from the buoys.

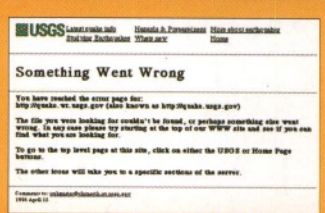


Vanessa's dip in the briny had worldwide consequences

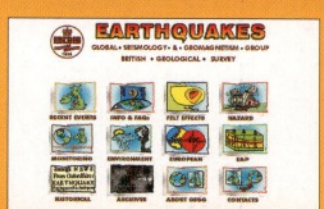
THE BEST SITE TO...



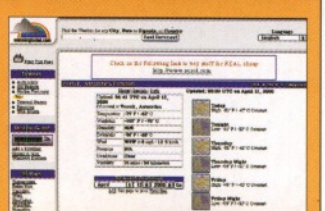
...READ A WEATHER FORECAST is the Met Office. Independent audits confirm our weather moguls get it right 86 percent of the time – making Michael Fish's 'no tornadoes' announcement in 1987 all the more ironic.
www.met-office.gov.uk



...LISTEN TO AN EARTHQUAKE is Quakes for Fun (part of the US Geological Survey site), where you can listen to a Real Audio recording of a 7.3 Richter scale quake in California. Even as a sound file, it's distinctly unnerving.
quake.wr.usgs.gov/more/listen



...CHECK ON THE LIKELIHOOD OF A QUAKE NEAR YOU has to be the British Geological Survey's earthquakes page. It includes yet another good reason why you really wouldn't want to live in North Wales.
www.gsrg.nmh.ac.uk/gsrg.html



...FIND THE WORLD'S DULLEST WEATHER FORECAST is Weather Underground's page for Vostok, Antarctica. It's a fine day when there's no snow and it's only 62 degrees centigrade below zero.
www.wunderground.com/global/stations/89606.html

...DISCOVER THE ROLE OF THE WEATHER IN HUMAN CONFLICT is the Military Weather History page. Find it at the Aberdeen Test Center's site at
www.atc.army.mil/meteorology/history.htm

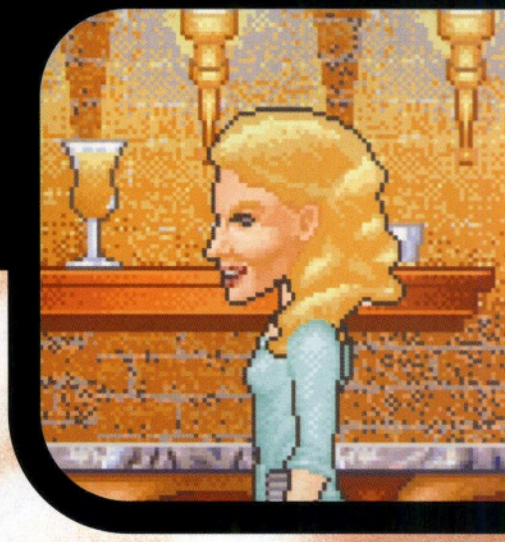
...FIND OUT IF IT'S SNOWING in the resort where you're planning serious aprés ski activities is, strangely, Yahoo's Ski and Snow For UK and Ireland. Most specialist sites are too American-centric.
uk.snow.yahoo.com

...DISCOVER IF YOU'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO STUDY VOLCANOES is Volcano World. Vulcanologists explain how wonderful it is to have molten rock all around you.
volcano.und.nodak.edu/vwdocs/interview

...READ WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE STRUCK BY LIGHTNING and survive is called July 7th, 1995 – the day 'Mad' Max's life changed, permanently, for the worse.
www.mindspring.com/~photomax/003m.htm

vzones

LIFE IN THE ZONES



Tim was screwed.

He needed to be at JavaDiva's apartment in five minutes and he was stuck in real life.

thus™

www.virtualzones.co.uk

THE NET JUST GOT PERSONAL - THE ULTIMATE AVATAR COMMUNITY

Retail therapy

Gorgeous George and Freddie to keep, and pizza delivered to your desktop – at last!

Computer £1,299

New from Hewlett Packard is the multimedia HP Pavilion 8670. And its *raison d'ëtre*? Well, it's a bit of a looker, and has a rather nifty one-touch keyboard for fast access to Internet sites. ***www.hp.com***

Joystick £21.97

Twist and shout with this high-precision Wingman Extreme Digital 3 joystick from Logitech. Delivery is free – if your gameplay can be put on hold for two days. ***www.uk.virtual-world.com***

Hat £23

Large it up in this rather happening titfer, ordered from ***www.boo.com***; p&p and delivery free. Mad for it!

Freeboard £185.95

'Flip a flakie or float a 360' with Freeboard, the latest craze to hit the streets. It's like snowboarding on the road, they say. Pay £2 for delivery and you could be slip-sliding away in three days. ***www.boardriders.co.uk***

Domino's pizza £12.55

How civilised! You can now order pizzas via the Net. This was a pepperoni pizza (large) before our photographer got his chops around it. Delivery time of around 40 minutes. ***www.dominos.co.uk***

Make-up from £2.50

An item for the ladies (and men who are *really* in touch with their feminine side). Tart yourself up courtesy of fantastic discounts of up to 75 percent. Delivery costs £1 and takes up to four days.

www.classcosmetics.com

Fan £36.95

Bag one of these ultra-modern oscillating fans now, before stocks run out during this summer's heatwave. Buy online, allowing three days and £12 for delivery.

www.comet.co.uk

Kettle £49.50

Spruce up your kitchen with a shiny De'longhi stainless steel kettle. Allow three days and £3.95 for delivery.

www.argos. co.uk

Figurines £69.99 each

They're eight inches tall, made of porcelain and we at *the net* love 'em: they're limited-edition Freddie Mercury and George Best (Northern Ireland flavour) figurines from Sheercast's huge range. Postage is included in the price, but allow a long 28 days for delivery.

www.sheercast.co.uk

THE NET'S TOP TIPS FOR ONLINE SHOPPING

Keep to our simple guidelines, and there's no reason why online shopping should end in a puddle of tears

■ **CHECK THE SITE IS SECURE** A small padlock will appear in the bottom left of your browser to show that you can safely send credit card details through the site. Your Web browser will also tell you whether a site is secure or not when you enter it.

■ **SHOP WITH BRAND-NAME COMPANIES** As with any shopping, you're better off with a company you've actually heard of.

■ **CHECK DELIVERY TIMES AND CHARGES** Companies should tell you the delivery charge if there is one on their site. If you live in the Highlands and Islands or Ireland, you may find that free delivery does not apply.

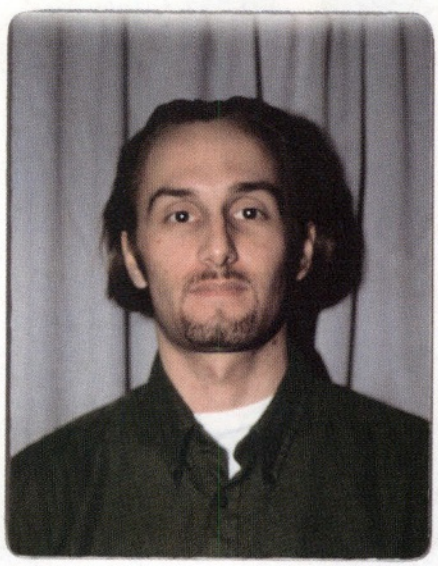
■ **NEVER SEND ANYTHING BY EMAIL** If a site asks for card details by email, don't oblige. It's far, far easier for emails to be intercepted.

■ **PRINT THE CONTRACT** This is the only permanent record of your purchase, so make sure you keep it, along with your order number and other details. Don't forget: if it's a UK site, you have the same consumer rights as you do in the High Street.

■ **IF IT GOES WRONG, DON'T WORRY** Contrary to scare stories, online shopping is safer and very often cheaper than traditional methods – and it's in the online store's interest to sort any problems out quickly.

PHOTOGRAPHY: NICK WRIGHT

PLAN YOUR HOLIDAY ON COMPANY TIME.



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Travelocity.co.uk
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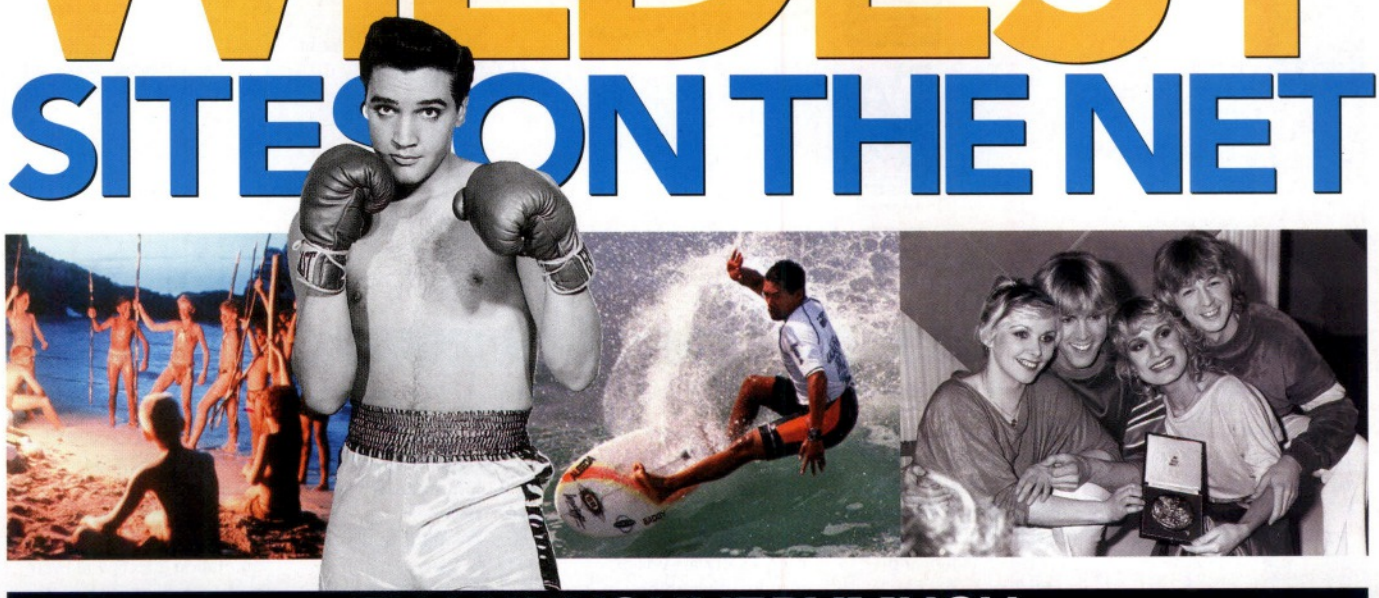
GO VIRTUALLY ANYWHERE

what website?

June 2000

YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO THE WICKEDEST, WILDEST SITES ON THE NET



THANKYOUVERYMUCH

SHOW ME THE SITES...

What Website?

JUNE

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Well, summer has pretty much arrived – which means the weather is pretty awful. Console yourself by investigating our helpful collection of choice Web sites, and forget all about nature's little joke. Check out all the wonders in What Website...

www.thenetnow.co.uk

EVERY LINK ON ONE GREAT SITE!

Help is at hand in your quest to locate the best URLs, courtesy of your friendly magazine (er, that's us). Simply type in one address – ***www.thenetnow.co.uk*** – and link up with the sites. Checking out Web pages doesn't get much easier...

thenet now
BRINGING THE BEST OF THE WEB TO YOUR BROWSER
Home
Net News
Opinion
Fun Stuff
Your Fave Sites
What Website?
Animals
Cars and Bikes
Celebrities
Computers
Food & Drink
Games
Health
History
WHAT WEBSITE? Find the best of the web
Every month, What Website? in the net magazine reviews hundreds of the very finest sites and you'll find links to all the sites we've ever reviewed in here.
New this month:
NEWS AND MEDIA
We think the model in our picture has got slightly the wrong idea about what you're supposed to do with a newspaper. We review the online versions, which you can't wear as a pair of trousers.
Read more like this in News and Media
SNOOKER
It's not just the interesting sports that make it onto the Web - the masters of the green baize have made it there as well. See if you can work out the relationship between Jimmy White and Trevor the Cod on Jimmy's fan site.
Read more like this in Sport
FISHKEEPING
Let's face it, fish don't have the most exciting life swimming round the same old tank all the time. We owe it to them to make their mundane life a bit more enjoyable by looking after them properly.
Read more like this in Animals
searchnow
enter keyword
Net News
GO FIND
BRITAIN'S BIGGEST SELLING INTERNET MAGAZINE
SUBSCRIBE NOW
Associated Sites
What Car?
Autosport Online
What Hi-Fi?
Haymarket Publishing
Sport

THE FREE SOFTWARE STARTER PACK

THE ULTIMATE HELP BUTTON ***www.thenetnow.co.uk*** All the essential free software reviewed and rated with links

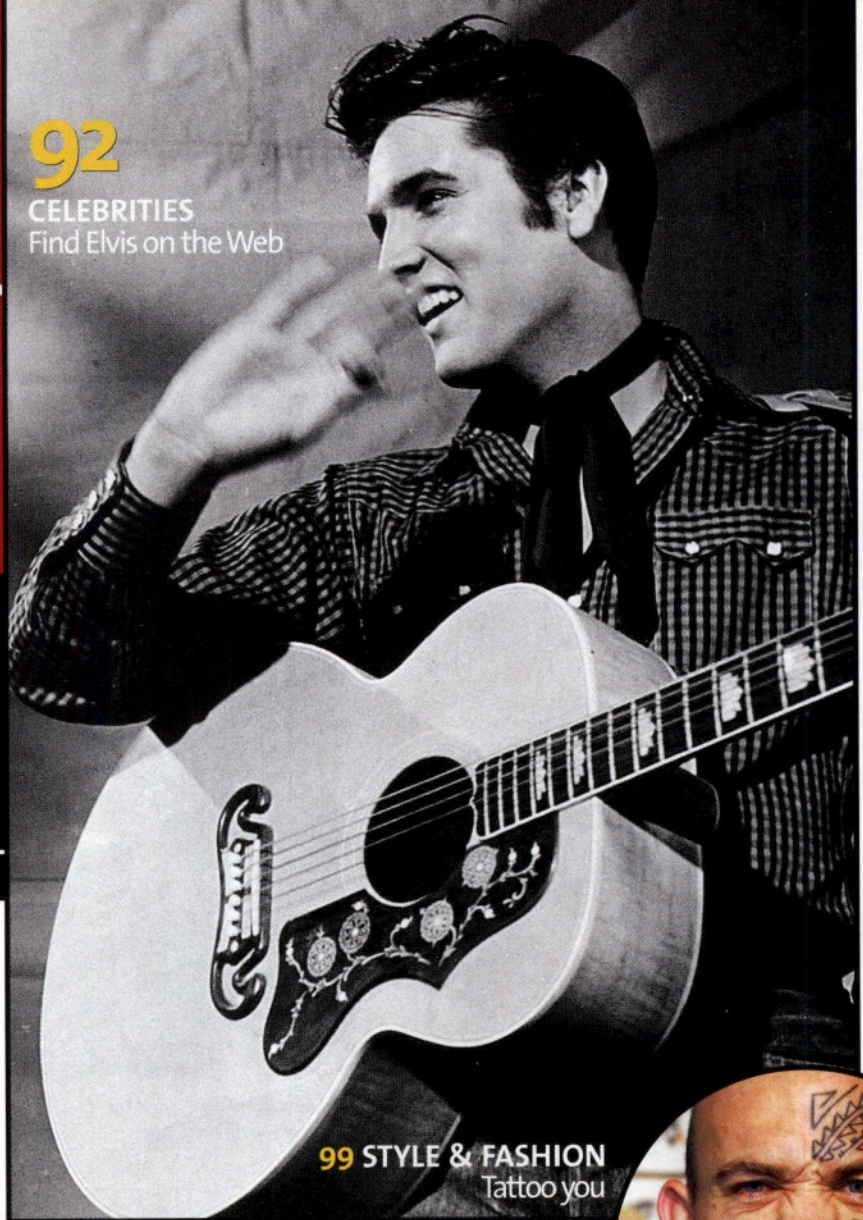
PLAYING MULTIMEDIA
BROWSER WATCH
browserwatch.internet.com/plug-in.html
A comprehensive list of browser plug-ins.

REALPLAYER G2
www.real.com
Cross-platform free software for streaming movie (RealVideo) and audio (RealAudio) files across the Internet.

QUICKTIME 4.0
www.apple.com/quicktime
Version 4 of this multi-media software will play just about anything, including MP3 files.

MICROSOFT MEDIAPLAYER
www.microsoft.com/mediaplayer
Plays streaming audio and video files saved in the MediaPlayer format.

SHOCKWAVE & FLASH
www.shockwave.com
A must-have if you want to enjoy sound, great animation effects and even natty games on Web sites.



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THE LISTINGS

JUNE 2000

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'Bonjour, wilkommen, welcome...' Yup, it's Eurovision time again

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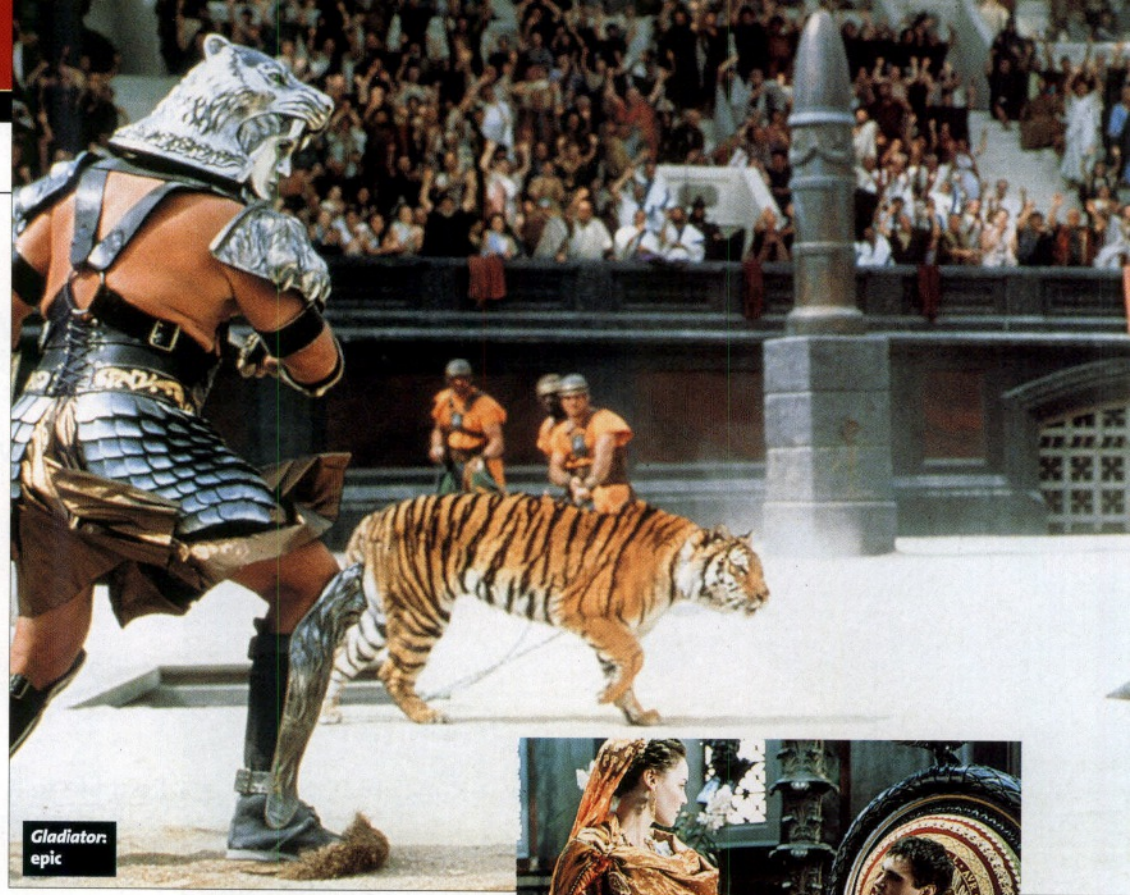
Feed them to the lions!

MOVIE RELEASES Marshall Julius decides who lives and who dies in his regular movie round-up


Gladiator: epic

Gladiator

Russell Crowe, Joaquin Phoenix, Richard Harris ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

A savage battle scene opens Ridley Scott's awesome sword-and-sandals adventure, setting the tone for the full-on fun to come. With the future of the Roman Empire at stake, charismatic gladiator Crowe takes on villainous Emperor Phoenix in a masterfully crafted tale of political intrigue and intense, visceral action. A brutal, compelling epic, this is Scott's best movie since *Alien*.

www.gladiator-thefilm.com *See the stunning trailer for a sneak preview.*

28 Days

Sandra Bullock, Viggo Mortensen, Dominic West ★★

Addicted to booze and pills, Bullock is sentenced to a month in rehab for a serious drunk driving offence. Trapped in a touchy-feely world of tearful counselling sessions, the cutesy lush follows a predictable route through to the movie's upbeat finale. A sick chick-flick which deals with serious issues in a shallow manner, this is watchable, but too soft around the edges.

www.soapcity.com/28days *There's hardly anything at all to this soppy site. A few cocktail recipes would have helped no end.*

Battlefield Earth

John Travolta, Barry Pepper, Forest Whitaker ★

Based on *Dianetics* guru L. Ron Hubbard's other great work of fiction, this sci-fi adventure takes place a thousand years in the future and sees mankind enslaved by an evil, over-sized alien race. Heroic human Pepper leads mankind against extraterrestrial Travolta. The latter's a leading Scientologist who bullied Hollywood into making this dud, which deserves to sink.

www.battlefieldearth.net *Pictures of Travolta in make-up, or view the trailer. At least it's shorter than the movie.*

Boiler Room

Giovanni Ribisi, Vin Diesel, Nicky Katt ★★★

Twenty-something scumbags with more money than morals stick it to their fellow man. Eager for a piece of the action, enterprising college dropout Ribisi falls in with a bunch of stock market scam artists before discovering scruples. Shallow and flawed, but fun while it lasts.

www.boilermovie.com *Average effort resembling an online investment site, offering Stock Exchange lingo, multimedia and all the usual behind-the-scenes info.*

Hanging Up

Meg Ryan, Diane Keaton, Lisa Kudrow ★

Saving Grace: one lump or two?

Saddled with a dying dad (Walter Matthau) and a pair of self-obsessed sisters, Ryan cries over the bad old days. Directed by co-star Keaton, this is a sentimental comedy drama that fails on every level.

Scream 3: behind you!

www.spe.sony.com/movies/hangingup/index.html *View interviews with the cast, or get exclusive movie info on your cellphone.*

Pitch Black

Vin Diesel, Radha Mitchell, Cole Hauser ★★★★

A band of futuristic folk crash land on a planet; it seems harmless enough until nasty computer-generated beasties come out to play... Great effects, heart-pounding action and a star-making performance from Diesel.

www.pitch-black.com/blackbox/index.html *Lots to see – very techno.*

Saving Grace

Brenda Blethyn, Craig Ferguson, Martin Clunes ★★

Drowning in debt, Cornish lass Blethyn and gardener Ferguson resort to marijuana cultivation – with chaotic results. As with most drug-themed comedies, those on-screen seem to enjoy themselves more than those watching, but this is pleasant enough: a funny Britcom packed with familiar faces. Probably best viewed while wasted, though.

upcomingmovies.com/saving-grace.html *Plot and cast details; plenty of links to other new films, too.*

Scream 3

Neve Campbell, Courteney Cox Arquette, David Arquette ★★★★

Wes Craven rounds off the trilogy in typically self-referential style, but the formula seems fresher than last time. Craven shifts the action to Sunrise Studios, Hollywood, where the cast of *Stab 3* are slowly being

WHAT THE SITES ARE SAYING

	aint-it-cool-news.com	cinemachine.com	cinematter.com	eonline.com	film.com	salon.com
Boiler Room	👍	👍	👎	👍	👎	👍
Hanging Up	👎	👎	👎	👎	👎	👎
Pitch Black	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍
Scream 3	👍	👍	👎	👍	👍	👍
Snow Falling On Cedars	👍	👎	👍	👍	👍	👍

PICTURES: MOVIESTORE COLLECTION

sliced and diced by yet another masked psycho. Silly, audience-pleasing stuff with some amusing cameos and, of course, lots of screaming.

www.scream3.com *Take an interactive tour of Sunrise Studios or connect to* ***galeweathers.com*** *on this clever, jokey site. Not much info about the actual movie, but lots of fun.*

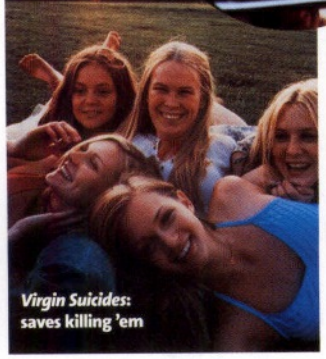
Snow Falling on Cedars

Ethan Hawke, Max von Sydow, Sam Shepard ★★

Director Scott Hicks follows world-wide arthouse hit *Shine* with this complex courthouse thriller. Set shortly after WWII in the Pacific North-West US, this tale of anti-Japanese prejudice seems to drag on forever. Ultimately too clever for its own good, it's much more about style than entertainment.

www.snowfallingoncedars.com *A little info, but nothing to get excited about.*

'It's a spider'



Virgin Suicides: saves killing 'em

CLASSIC FILM

DAWN OF THE DEAD

David Emge, Ken Foree, Scott Reiniger (1978)

When there's no more room in Hell, the dead will walk the Earth... Zombies are the dominant species in this apocalyptic horror classic, as four desperate survivors hole up in a shopping mall crawling with stumbling, decaying flesh-eaters. The second chapter of George Romero's masterful *Dead* trilogy is, by turns, terrifying, exciting, scary and tragic, and, thanks to make-up legend Tom Savini, bloodier than a slaughterhouse. The definitive zombie flick.

www.monroevillemall.net *Check out modern shots of the mall where the movie was filmed and download a creepy desktop design from this obsessive fan site.*

'...and when I count to ten'

The Virgin Suicides

James Woods, Kathleen Turner, Danny DeVito, Kirsten Dunst ★★★★

Ambitiously adapting Jeffrey Eugenides' best-seller, Sofia Coppola proves more adept behind the cameras than in front of them as writer and director of this mysterious drama. Five beautiful sisters cope with strict Catholic parents while bewitching local lads in this exploration of adolescence in '70s suburbia. Air's mellow prog-rock soundtrack contributes to the movie's dream-like quality.

www.virginsuicides.com *Listen to soundtrack samples and e-mail questions to the cast on this good-looking site.*

Snow Falling On Cedars: taxi!

THE ONES TO WATCH

VIDEO RELEASES Films to rent, buy or bin this month. Now with added DVD!

BROKEDOWN PALACE

Claire Danes, Kate Beckinsale

This feeble drama sees two Yank teens banged up in Thailand for smuggling drugs they didn't know they had. You won't care.

www.foxmovies.com/brokedowncs.html

EDTV

Matthew McConaughey, Ellen DeGeneres

Ron Howard rips off *The Truman Show* with an overblown drama/comedy you can afford to miss. McConaughey is an ordinary bloke whose life is broadcast 24/7 on a struggling cable channel with only mildly entertaining – and easily anticipated – results.

www.ed-tv.com

FIGHT CLUB

Brad Pitt, Edward Norton

Sick and tired of life, insomniac Norton and freaky new pal Pitt stir things up with a little organised violence. As tough and surprising as a slap in the face; edgy, freaky and funny with it.

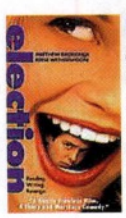
www.fightclub.co.uk

EAST IS EAST

Om Puri, Linda Bassett

Frequently funny culture-clash drama set in '70s Salford, where Puri's proud Pakistani father struggles to enforce Muslim values on his kids. Intelligent, with a strong cast and a good heart.

www.eastiseast.co.uk



ELECTION

Matthew Broderick, Reese Witherspoon

A satire on American society, this hilarious comedy has teacher Broderick locking horns with student Witherspoon over a high-school campaign for student-body president.

www.electionmovie.com

THE SIXTH SENSE

Bruce Willis, Haley Joel Osment

A supernatural thriller which will draw you in and shake you up before finally spitting you out the other end dazed and amazed. This clever and ultimately scary movie sees child psychologist Willis struggling to help a haunted little boy.

video.go.com/thesixthsense/index.html

The Radox Christmas party got out of hand

WonkaFacts

www.borg.com/~superman

★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Roald Dahl's twisted mind was seldom better put to use than in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, and the acid-tinged late-60s film version almost did the book justice. Jason Reick's site covers all the usual bases (biographies, lyrics) well enough, but it's the extra touches which separate it from the rest and make it stand out: translations of Willy Wonka's multilingual phrases, an interview with a special effects guru and a short rewrite which updates one of Dahl's original characters, the square-eyed Mike Teevee, to a more modern, Net-surfing Mike Dotcom.

WORDS: GARY PARKINSON; PICTURES: KOBAL, MOVIESTORE

Face the music and dance...

MUSICALS Enter an alternative universe, where people burst into song at the drop of a hat

'Look! Candyfloss!'

Fame Forever

famemovie.8m.com ★★★

Legwarmers ahoy! Here's a corner of the Web that's forever 1980, where you can relive the disturbing sights and sickly-sweet sounds from the New York City High School for the Performing Arts. Shockingly pink pages provide lyrics, RealAudio singalongs and dozens of pictures of Leroy and 'that bloke with the hair who played the piano'.

Grease

www.greasemovie.com/index_toc.html ★★★★

They say you always get nostalgic for the period that occurred 20 years before, which means we're in for an OMD revival... but would also explain why late-70s America went mad over 50s-set *Grease*, *American Graffiti* and *Happy Days*. This official but not overbearing site, tastefully trailing a late-90s re-release, looks the period part (all formica tables and wing fins) and retells the story with an obvious passion.

Problem hair? Call now...

Katarina's 'Annie – The Movie' Website

anniemovie.homepage.nu ★★★

Either angelic or irksome, Annie's the bubble-permed orphan who first hit the big screen in 1982 after Broadway success. A similarly sunny teenager maintains this shrine, which tells you more than you ever need to know about the parentless moppet. Avoid if you don't like exclamation marks.

My Fair Lady

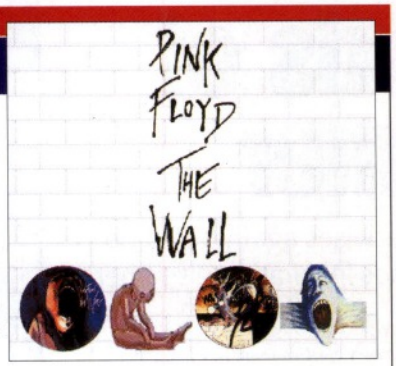
www.tcfhe.com/myfairlady ★★★★

It's a swizz! After starring in the stage version of this *Pygmalion* rewrite, Julie Andrews was elbowed out of the big-screen remake in favour of the better-known, but tuneless, Audrey Hepburn. However, you wouldn't learn that bit of gossip from this sanitised, 'TM'-peppered Twentieth Century Fox site. Instead, a showy Shockwave storyboard tells the tale with plenty of clips, while horticulturists will gasp in awe at the forest of foliage.

RELIGIOUS CONVICTION

OPERA WHIMSY

Despite Julie Andrews' wholesomeness, there's a danger that those addicted to musicals will move on to harder things. Musicals include spoken dialogue to help with fripperies like a plot, but the rock opera eschews such notions – invariably due to rock star ego, and invariably to disastrous effect. The 70s were particularly bad, with *Hair* needing cutting and *Tommy* (***www.grey.net/mirrors/tommy/history.html***) garnering ridicule for The Who. The 80s wrought Pink Floyd's *The Wall* (***members.surfsouth.com/~breezy/#top***) upon an unsuspecting public, followed by Madonna hamming for Argentina in Lloyd Webber's *Evita* (***www.journey-on.com/evita/index.html***). Stick to the day jobs.



Nanny's wind was becoming a real problem

Only life members got the 'special' service at the British Library

Tommy would always perch on the top of the gate

Mary Poppins

www.mary-poppins.co.uk ★★★★

Unhurt by her *My Fair Lady* rejection, Julie Andrews instead signed up for this monster Disney hit which brought pleasure to many, especially thanks to Dick van Dyke's laughable Cock-er-nee accent. This vibrant (indeed, you might say supercalifragilisticexpialidocious) amateur site might interest the solicitors: it includes a complete transcript of the original book and full lyrics to all the songs.

Oliver!

w1.303.telia.com/~u30302957/OLIVER1.html ★★★

An earnest site run by a young Swedish fan, providing background and information on the cherubic-urchin classic. Writer Lionel Bart couldn't read sheet music but he could write a tune, as proved by the recent sampling of *I'd Do Anything* for a dance record – which is about as far as you can get from the original Dickens novel.

Welcome To The Sound of Music

www.foxhome.com/soundofmusic ★★★★

Another cracking musical with the mad-for-it Julie Andrews, this time running up hills in Austria. This extensive and informative site allows you to stage a Shockwave puppet show, record and upload your best yodel and search the site for clues to a win-a-weekend competition. Worth it for gold-diggers as well as fans, then.

West Side Story

www.geocities.com/Broadway/4243/west-side-story.html ★★★

A contemporary *Romeo and Juliet* made 13 years before DiCaprio was born, New York-set *WSS* has gangs of Puerto Ricans dancing round tenement fire escapes. This tidily presented section of a huge site dedicated to 'the absolutely unique American actor-dancer-singer George Chakiris' (who?) has a full trivia section but could use some multimedia whistles and bells.

The Wizard Of Oz

www.thewizardofoz.com ★★★

The yellow brick road around this confusingly colourful site is lined with merchandise, a consequence of Warner Bros' corporate dollar-chasing. However, if you can stomach the constant exhortations to buy Dorothy's ruby red slippers and such you'll enjoy the mazes, Shockwave games and photo galleries on a site which, like the film, is designed to appeal to young and old alike.

best movies sites ★★★★★

where can I...

GET LATEST NEWS AND RELEASE DATES?

www.popcorn.co.uk
British perspective on new releases.
aint-it-cool-news.com
Gives the inside track on new films.
www.filmunlimited.co.uk
Views and news from *The Guardian*.
uk.imdb.com
The bible of online film – use the search engine or you'll soon be lost.

DECIDE WHAT TO SEE?

cinemachine.com
Retrieves film reviews.
www.filmreview.co.uk
A review site to rival the Americans.
www.mrqe.com
Flamboyantly-titled Movie Review Query Engine with 17,000+ films.
www.movie-trailers.com
Trailers for all new films, plus archives.

FIND OFFICIAL FILM SITES?

www.foxmovies.com
Provides links to all 20th Century Fox movie releases.
www.movies.warnerbros.com
WB's new films and lost classics.
www.disney.co.uk/DisneyMovies
All the kids' favourites in one go.

Something for the kids – disney.co.uk

SEARCH FOR OBSCURE FILMS AND SCRIPTS?

www.script-o-rama.com
Read rejected scripts for well-known films plus transcripts of obscure ones.
www.ohthehumanity.com
The worst movies of all time rated.
www.stinkers.com
Clips of the worst movies ever.
www.freemoviescripts.com
Scripts, plus plays and novels too.

FIND A CINEMA?

www.uci-cinemas.co.uk
Great search engine for film screenings.
www.odeon.co.uk
Book online, or peruse the latest information.
cinema.scoot.co.uk
From the people behind the directory.
www.cineworld.co.uk
UK film portal that also includes a cinema finder.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

rec.music.movies
The soundtracks to the classics.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Discuss the art of film-making by sending an email marked 'subscribe film-theory' to ***Majordomo@lists.village.virginia.edu***

GET CHATTING?

buzzcom.com
Get the word on new movies before they're out over here.

The sounds of the summer

NEW RELEASES John Mullen advises against Justine's tricky second album, but finds inspiration elsewhere

Chumbawumba

WYSIWYG **EMI** ★

The title stands for 'What You See Is What You Get', and what you see is a band desperately attempting to capture the zeitgeist again after their unfortunate success with the yob anthem *Tubthumping*. They're back to more political themes here, from the failures of New Labour to GM food, with music so horrible it sounds like the musical pastiches you used to hear on *Spitting Image*. ***www.chumba.com*** The band's site, with sections on their revolutionary heroes, various political campaigns and what they're currently reading.

The Delgados

The Great Eastern **CHEMIKAL UNDERGROUND** ★★★★

The Delgs' are finally getting the credit they deserve for their own luscious brand of post-rock. It's the kind of musical leap that Mercury Rev and The Flaming Lips made last year, mixing wild experimental journeys with perfectly poised pop songs. ***www.chemikal.demon.co.uk*** The official site of The Delgados' label, with good links for other Chemikal bands like Cha Cha Cohen.

Elastica

The Menace **DECEPTIVE** ★★★

Damon Albarn's ex, Justine Frischmann, gets her own back here on the intriguingly sleazy *My Sex*, but elsewhere there's precious little sign that her band has made any kind of musical development in the past six years. Still clearly indebted to Wire and The Stranglers, there are lots of thrills to be found here, but after so long you have to wonder if anyone still cares. ***www.elastica.co.uk*** Fun fan-page, including links to an Elastica online community called, somewhat worryingly, the 'Spastic Society'.

The Chumbas: monkeys

Delgados: clothes model's own

PICTURES: RETNA

Idlewild

100 Broken Windows **FOOD** ★★★★

Beginning life as an energetic bunch of Ash clones, this Scottish quartet have gradually discovered there's a horrible price to pay for staying up all night quaffing Hooch. So now they're taking their cue from US hardcore acts like Hüsker Du and Henry Rollins' old band Black Flag, crafting sweet Beatles-esque melodies then smashing them into smithereens with bulldozer guitars. And you know what? It's absolutely awesome. ***www.btinternet. com/~idlewild*** Easy-to-use Web page with a regular competition section.

MC5

Best Of The MC5 **RHINO** ★★★★★

With devotees ranging from Orbital to Primal Scream, MC5 were magnificent and moronic in equal measure. Arguing for armed revolution at a time when hippies were telling everyone to chill out, The Man was so scared of them that their manager got sent down for ten years (that's ten years!) for possession of two joints. These songs, best heard on the frenzied live out-takes, still make their peers sound tame. ***ourworld.com puserve.com/homepages/rauk/mc-5.htm*** Read their manifesto: 'We demand a free music that will drive us wild into the streets... yelling and screaming and tearing down everything that would keep people slaves.' Yowsa!

Moloko

Things To Make And Do **ECHO** ★★★★

This album capitalises on Moloko's John Travolta-style upturn in fortunes, combining their love of

ALBUM OF THE MONTH

The Magnetic Fields

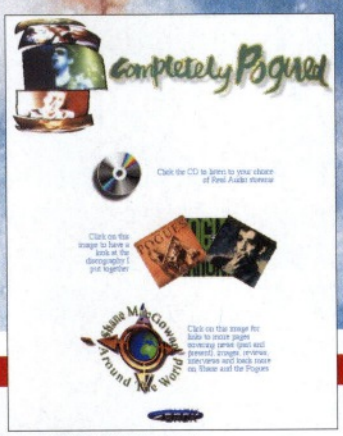
69 Love Songs **CIRCUS** ★★★★★

This album triumphed in US best albums polls last year, and now Britain can sample the genius of the greatest band to come out of the States since Nirvana. Using the Ronseal approach to album titles, this does indeed contain 69 songs that look at love from every angle, the whole thing being held together by Stephen Merritt's Scott Walker-esque vocals. Even at three hours, your attention won't waiver for a second.

www.trouserarousal.net/magfields **An excellent fan site with candid shots of the band, album covers, a set list archive and even a picture of the singer's mum.**

We've not heard of them either...

Blofeld's piranhas disposed of another dance band



CLASSIC ALBUM

THE POGUES

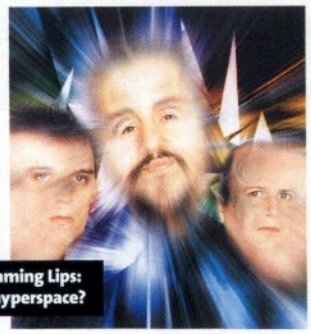
If I Should Fall From Grace With God **POGUE MAHONE-EMI**
Whatever you think about Shane MacGowan's fall from grace, there's no doubt that the toothless one was touched by genius. And while all The Pogues' albums are brilliant, this one manages to be both highly commercial and utterly uncompromising, whether it's the haunting *Lullaby Of London*, the growling *Birmingham Six* or best-Christmas-song-ever *Fairytale of New York*. Get well soon, Shane.
www.ferrie.demon.co.uk/pogues/index.htm Hear the band at their best with this extensive collection of RealAudio snippets.

McGowan: bar stools for legs

GIG AND TOUR GUIDE

MAY Summer's here – and the time is right...

THE BLUETONES
Nice lads with nice tunes play some nice gigs. Nice.
19 May Guildford Civic Hall **20 May** Norwich UEA **21 May** Manchester Academy **23 May** Middlesborough Town Hall **24 May** Leeds Town & Country Club **25 May** Wolverhampton Civic Hall ***www.superiorqualityrecordings.co.uk***



The Flaming Lips: from hyperspace?

THE FLAMING LIPS
American legends finally getting the attention they deserve.
10 May Glasgow Garage **11 May** Leeds Metropolitan University **12 May** London South Bank Royal Festival Hall ***www.flaminglips.com***

HOMELANDS
Superior dance festival featuring Leftfield, Ian Brown and Carl Cox.
27-28 May The Bowl, Matterley Estate, Winchester
www.leftfield-online.com

PEARL JAM
Big-lunged Eddie Vedder shows that there's life after grunge.
29 May London Wembley Arena **3 June** Glasgow SECC **4 May** Manchester Evening News Arena **6 May** Cardiff International Arena
pearl-jam.com

LOU REED
Laughing Lou brings his dancing troop of monkeys to town.
17 May Edinburgh Playhouse **18-19 May** London Royal Albert Hall
www.loureed.org

The Lou-on-a-stick was a crowd pleaser

organic, acoustic instrumentation with the kind of inventive, pounding beats that will keep the Gatecrasher kids kippered off their griddle for several hours.
www.moloko.co.uk Bizarre site which features pictures of dead animals supplied by the band!

Elliott Smith
Figure 8 **DREAMWORKS** ★★★★
Last heard on the end credits of *American Beauty*, Smith used to be famous for putting out two albums a year (are you listening, Justine?). He's spent a bit more time on this one and it shows, with a more realised sense of story-telling that puts him up there with Cohen and Costello. Not many laughs in these downbeat tales, but the sumptuous music makes even the bleakest moments irresistible.
members.tripod.com/~pitseleh/elliott smith.html Exhaustive site featuring an excellent collection of downloadable video appearances.

Paul Weller
Heliocentric **UNIVERSAL/ISLAND** ★★
With his Kangol-hatted spawn Ocean Colour Scene and Oasis a little dull these days, it's no surprise to find that Weller's latest is also a bit below par. Even more in hock to his Mod idols The Who and The Kinks than usual, there's even a touch of League Of Gentleman's Créme Brulee on tracks like *A Whale's Song*, which is about – gentle Jesus! – saving the whale. It's a shit business, isn't it?
www.columbia.edu/~als3/splinter.html Everything you could want to know about The Modfather, with links to an auction site where you can purchase Weller rarities.

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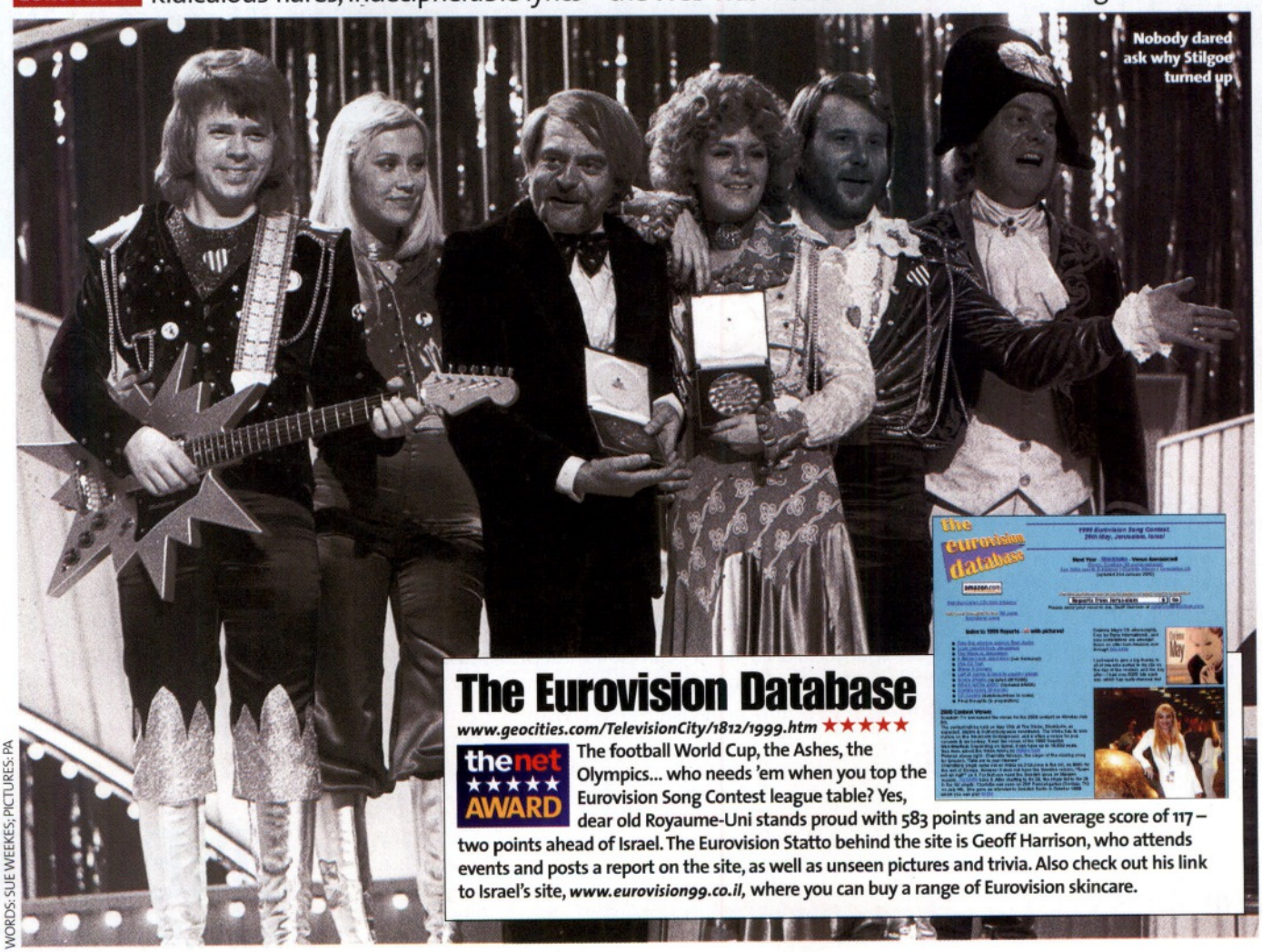
'And nul points for Luxembourg'

EUROVISION Ridiculous flares, indecipherable lyrics – the Web was made for the Eurovision Song Contest


Nobody dared ask why Stilgoe turned up

Arthur's Eurosong Homepage

members.xoom.com/_XMCM/eurosong ★★★

Eurovision fans like to be photographed with contestants, and Arthur's managed to get a fair few – the contestant is the nervous-looking one under Arthur's armpit. Check out his list of key events, including the 1963 scandal in which Katie Boyle had a misunderstanding with the Norwegian jury – it's easily done.

European Broadcasting Union TV

www.ebu.ch/tv/cec_frm.html ★★

The European Broadcasting Union kicked Eurovision off back in 1956. It offers a rather scant-looking site but does give the latest Euro headlines, if not the stories behind them (for info: Croatia's backing tracks caused an uproar because the male voices were synthesised). There are also audio and lyrics from recent contests.

Terry managed a smile as the boa's jaws snapped shut

Eurosong 2000

eurosong2000.com ★★★★

The Swedish Television site is an attempt by the host nation to bring minimalism to proceedings, but we don't think Eurovision's ready for the IKEA treatment yet. You can find out more about this year's presenter Kattis Ahlstrom, who says she's been saying things like 'Norvège, sept points' for fun – and now she could be doing it for real. Norway should be so lucky.

Eurovision Euphoria

www.geocities.com/~eurosong/index.htm ★★★

Neil's been hooked on Eurovision ever since he saw 1988 entrant Scott Fitzgerald beaten by Celine Dion (bitch), singing for Switzerland. For co-Webmaster Paul, meanwhile, it began with Bucks Fizz in 1981. There's a chance to vote for your favourites, along with audio to remind you just how bad Turkey's entries can be.

China's fossil forgeries became ever more elaborate

'Ready, aim, FIRE...!'

The Eurovision ICQ List

members.tripod.com/~Asaf19 ★★★

Chris Karanikos is a 28-year-old Aussie, who apparently has become known for the 'counselling of lost

The Eurovision Database

www.geocities.com/TelevisionCity/1812/1999.htm ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

The football World Cup, the Ashes, the Olympics... who needs 'em when you top the Eurovision Song Contest league table? Yes, dear old Royaume-Uni stands proud with 583 points and an average score of 117 – two points ahead of Israel. The Eurovision Statto behind the site is Geoff Harrison, who attends events and posts a report on the site, as well as unseen pictures and trivia. Also check out his link to Israel's site, *www.eurovision99.co.il*, where you can buy a range of Eurovision skincare.

WORDS: SUE WEEKES; PICTURES: PA

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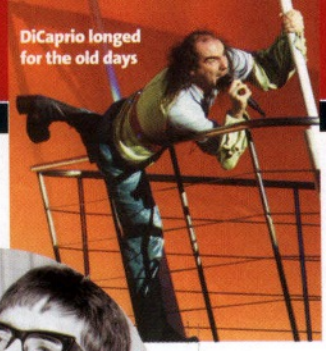
DiCaprio longed for the old days

souls and confused ones.' Presumably former Eurovision entrants provide plenty of steady business for him. There's plenty more where Chris came from on the ICQ list, and a fair few of them have their own Web sites.

'A lady! Keep away!'

letter to the page. It does include info on how to enter next year's contest, though.

Eurovision Official Home Page

www.bbc.co.uk/eurovision ★★

Where would Terry Wogan be without Eurovision? At the rather staid BBC site you can 'ask Terry' Euro questions. He can't promise to answer them, but may add your

The Eurovision Radio Website

members.tripod.com/ESCRadio ★★★

'If you can give interesting information about your country in this Eurovision, email ESCRadio,' says this site. Come up with a couple of pithy sound bites about the German entry and you're there... Euro stardom could be just a few clicks away.

Yes, it is a sort of ginger

best music sites ★★★★★ where can I...

FIND A BAND SITE?

www.ubl.com
Make this the first stop on your quest for its huge search engine.
www.bigmouth.co.uk
UK-specific site with tons of links.
www.musicsearch.com
Find artist sites or music services.
www.wallofsound.com
Links features from the US.

READ THE LATEST NEWS AND REVIEWS?

www.rollingstone.com
The well-written US publication features extra online content.
www.music365.co.uk
Enjoyable features and news from the 365 Corporation.
www.qonline.com
Increasingly essential online version of the popular magazine.
www.dotmusic.com
British site for all rock and pop news.

FIND GIGS AND TOURS?

www.ticketlinks.com
Full database of musical events.
www.aloud.com
Brilliant search engine for gigs.
www.sceneone.co.uk
Entertainment portal.

BUY NEW CDs?

www.yalplay.com
Popular CD and video store.
www.audiostreet.com
A cheap and easy-to-navigate store.

Post an MP3 at getoutthere.bt.com

www.boxman.co.uk
Competitive and easy on the eye.
www.jungle.com
Cheap and cheerful shopping.

FIND OUT ABOUT MP3s?

www.mp3now.com
One of the most popular MP3 portals, now expanding into the UK.
www.mp3board.com
Impressive database, searchable by either artist name or song title.
mp3.lycos.com
Browse the world of MP3s.
www.mp3.com
Official site; heaps of downloads.

POST MY BAND'S MP3s?

www.crunch.co.uk
Signs artists exclusively for the site.
www.peoplesound.com
A popular unsigned band portal.
www.vitaminic.co.uk
New, professional-looking MP3 site.
www.getoutthere.bt.com
BT-run film and music portal.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.music.eurovision
Yes, there is a newsgroup...

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Join the list at ***www.virtuetv.com*** and keep up to date with new shows.

GET CHATTING?

www.eurosong.net
Includes downloads of new Euro tracks.

Looking for more Music sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 116

OBSCURE EUROPOP
ALL GREEK

Looking for that toe-tappingly catchy 1994 Polish Eurovision entry to complete your set? Desperate to hear that Greek number that you danced to in Corfu last year? Look no further. Trehantiri in Haringey, north London, is the very proud purveyor of Greek, Arabic and Eurovision CDs and vinyl. At *www.trehantiri.co.uk* you can find out exactly which gems are hidden in its dusty racks. But much like the people behind the site, take nothing for granted: 'If you are reading this page,' says the home page, 'the milinnium bug has not struck'.

The Song Thrush – The Ultimate Eurovision Song Archive

members.xoom.com/songthrush ★★★

Whether it's *Didai Didai Dai* (Turkey 1985) or *Pump Pump* (Finland 1976), you'll find it here. Eurovision has spawned more ludicrous lyrics than Alanis Morisette, and someone has brought them all together here. Like a winning contestant, we don't know whether to laugh or cry.

UK Calling

www.ukcalling.freeserve.co.uk ★★★

Nobody will ever say 'nul points' like Katie Boyle. A picture of her adorns this site, where the emphasis is on predictions for Eurovision 2000. There are lots of sound files, and a Eurovision karaoke section. Seriously.

'Exits to the left and right...'

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online
alphabetstreet.co.uk
Buy books on-line, up to 50% off best selling books, free delivery in the UK
audiostreet.co.uk
Buy music on-line, a whole range of CDs from £9.99, free delivery in the UK
DVDstreet.co.uk
Buy DVDs on-line, the UK's most comprehensive DVD store with up to 40% off and free delivery in the UK
gamesstreet.co.uk
Buy games on-line, the UK's premier games site for all platforms, up to 40% off, free delivery in the UK
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REALITY TELEVISION The best real-life telly comes from the US; if you haven't got cable, try the Net

Candid Camera

www.candidcamera.com ★★

Long since dropped this side of the pond for being, well, crap, *Candid Camera* continues to flourish in the US. The idea is simple: viewers send in ideas for 'hilarious stunts' which a Beadle-esque prankster makes hideous reality. Check out future features here – but be sure to hold on to your sides.

Divorce Court

www.divorcecourttv.com ★★★

'Ana told Martin she didn't love him but was only marrying him for the financial security. He feels deceived that she never put any effort into the marriage.' And where else would they go to air their grievances but a national TV show, hosted by a real judge with the power to make legally-binding verdicts? Check out the latest cases here – or apply to be on the show yourself.

Guinness World Records Primetime

www.guinnessworldrecordstv.com ★★★

Dragging the traditional circus freak show into the 21st century, *Guinness World Records Primetime* is something akin to *Record Breakers* on acid. Current features include a man with three feet (in a chiropodial sense, you understand) and a 62-year-old woman with the smallest corseted waist on a living person.

Judge Judy

www.judgejudy.com ★★

The idea of having traumatic events played out to millions might not appeal – but then you're probably not one of the litigants on *Judge Judy*, whose eponymous host dispenses wit and wisdom ('Madam, on Father's Day your house is going to need a revolving door') to miscreants. Sadly, the site doesn't live up to the promise of the show.

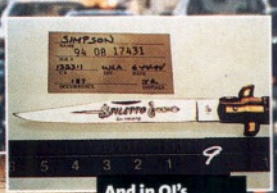
America's Most Wanted

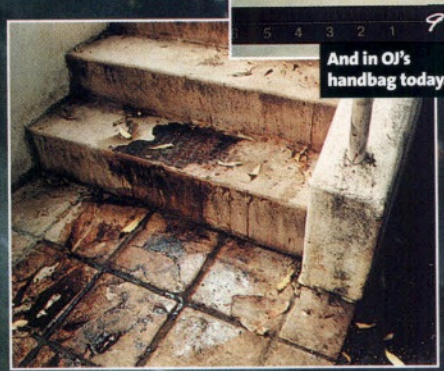
www.amw.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

'Reality television,' as it's been dubbed, is something of a phenomenon Stateside – and *America's Most Wanted*, launched in 1988, was the catalyst for the explosion. Ostensibly a *Crimewatch*-style rundown of the FBI's most wanted criminals (600 of them have been banged up as a result of the show), *AMW* is actually little more than cheap titillation for *National Enquirer* readers. Still, the site's superb, with archived details of those still on the run, and a chat room for crim-hunters. All this, and you can buy a *Most Wanted* baseball cap, too. Beat that, Nick Ross.

Caring guy, GSOH, seeks...





And in OJ's handbag today...

WORDS: PAUL WINSLOW; PICTURES: CORBIS, REX, SIPA PRESS

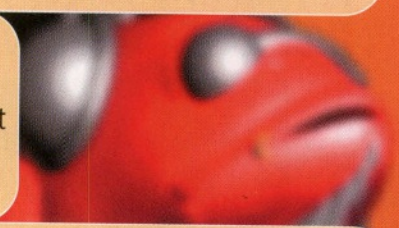
• **no** engaged tones or downtime • **unlimited** personal e-mail • **unlimited** personal web space
• **fastest** downloads on the planet • **no** subscription charges • **easy** website building tools
• **free** games servers • **domain** name registration • **free** mp3 music • **free** support

Madasafish

freedom for the net generation

Madasafish - funkier, faster and friendlier than any other ISP which contains the word free.
Not a boring old supermarket chain either.
Completely independent. We run our own network - with superfast connectivity - and our own support centre.

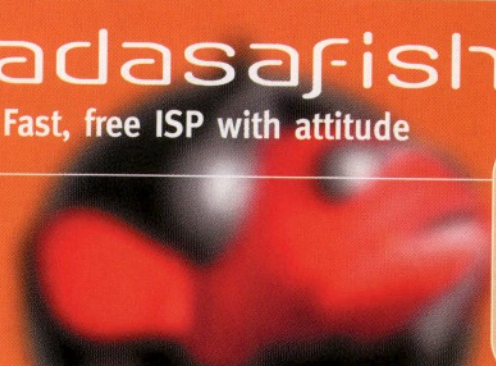
We know what you want from your ISP.
You want it free. Fast. Unlimited webspace, email and newsgroups. Free fast games servers. Free MP3 music to go.
The full monty....



Madasafish

Fast, free ISP with attitude

And we know what you don't want.
You don't want downtime, engaged tones or a naff email address.



Even if you have any problems, don't panic, call **01851 777727** and one of our esteemed customer service agents will help you solve it right away.
And don't worry - it's not a premium rate call (like some other "free" ISPs) just your telephone provider's normal charges...

So that's it then. It's Madasafish for you. You get everything you want - with no downtime or engaged tones.
And you get a Madasafish email address. Sorted!

for FREE internet access call **0800 0273373** or visit

www.madasafish.com for details

'Delivery for Ms Feltz'

Judge Wapner's Animal Court

animal.discovery.com/animalpages/wapner/wapner.html ★★★★

Yes, that's a court for animals. Or rather, their owners – and with case titles like 'Broken Cat', no animal lover can fail to be moved by the interactive voting on offer. Interesting fact: 'Judge Wapner was shot by a Japanese sniper in the war. The bullet penetrated his poncho through to his knapsack, where it was stopped by a can of tuna fish sent by his mother.'

Everett forgot his key once again

People's Court

www.peoplescourt.com ★★★★

Featuring Judge Judy's husband (also a judge, wouldn't you know?), *People's Court*, although remarkably similar to other shows in the genre, somehow seems to have picked off the most salacious cases. Plus it also boasts a fantastic site with details of archived cases and an impressive multimedia gallery.

best TV sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND PROGRAMME GUIDES FOR POPULAR SHOWS?

www.onlyfools.net
A massive shrine to *Only Fools And Horses* by the official fan club.
www.snpp.com/episodeguide.html
Every *Simpsons* episode listed.
www.beef-cake.com
At-a-glance guide to *South Park*.

LOOK UP TV PERSONALITIES?

infospace.com/celeb/celebrity.htm
Easy-to-use celeb search engine.
www.nyt.co.uk/celebrit.htm
Book a celebrity.
www.jerryspringer.com
Everyone's favourite talk-show host.

BUY TV MEMORABILIA?

www.tvtoys.com
Pick up TV toys, books – and more.
www.universal-studios.net/movieprops.html
Log in and head for the shop. A Jean-Luc Picard doll for a mere $35?
www.noveltytogs.com
A great source for *South Park* and *Simpsons* stuff in pounds sterling.

FIND TV LISTINGS?

www.toaster.co.uk
Well-presented electronic programme guide.
www.freeserve.co.uk/tvnradio
Use the handy instant soap update.
www.radiotimes.beeb.com
Britain's favourite listings magazine finally goes online.
www.digiguide.co.uk
Custom-build UK telly listings.

WATCH TV?

www.virtuetv.co.uk
Live events and classic films.
www.beeb.com
RealVideo news and snippets.
www.broadcast.com
If it's going live, it'll be listed here.
www.livetv.wwitv.com
Hook up with 100+ live TV stations around the world.

FIND TV NEWS AND INFO?

tv.cream.org
One of the best sites around for long-dead shows.
www.bigglethwaite.com
Definitive guide to British TV online.
www.ultimatetv.com
US biased; try the 'Ask Mr TV' facility.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

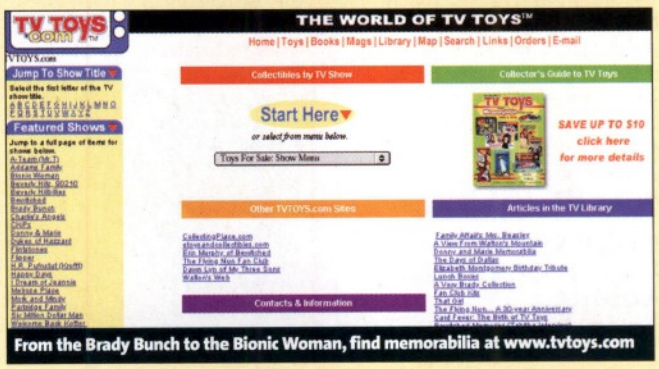
alt.tv.daytime
Meet plenty of other like-minded souls who've nothing better to do.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Want to find out about writing your own television blockbuster? Mail ***majordomo@spies.com*** with 'info episodic-1' in the message.

GET CHATTING?

www.peoplescourt.com/cmp/interact.html
Discuss cases with fellow watchers.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Home | Toys | Books | Mags | Library | Map | Search | Links | Orders | E-mail
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Featured Shows
Collectibles by TV Show
Collector's Guide to TV Toys
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Toys For Sale: Show Menu
SAVE UP TO $10 click here for more details
Other TVTOYS.com Sites
Articles in the TV Library
Contacts & Information
From the Brady Bunch to the Bionic Woman, find memorabilia at www.tvtoys.com

Looking for more Television sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 116

No grassy knolls to blame this time

CRIMINAL STUPIDITY

'HOLD MY SWAG, LOVE'

Crime never pays, and appearing on hit TV show *America's Dumbest Criminals* (*www.dumbcrimes.com*) doesn't do much for your underworld cred. The show highlights hilarious tales of stupidity, perpetrated largely by those from the southernmost states. Among recent flawed felonies were a bankrobber with a note reading: 'This is a robbery. Put all your money in the bag. I'll be back in 30 minutes to pick it up'; a convict who told a hospital he had broken his leg 'while escaping from jail'; and a vegetable-stand robber seen off by a female pensioner with a zucchini. How long before such classics end up on the ITV network?

Real TV

www.realtv1.com ★★★★★

Real TV, aired on Paramount, is as rough and ready as they come, with true-life viewer clips ranging from the cute ('Penguin shops for groceries', 'Dog mothers cellphone') to the plain sick ('Amusement park disaster the Government don't want the public to see').

Trauma: Life in the ER

tlc.discovery.com/tlcpages/trauma/trauma.html ★★★★

If gore is your speciality, step right up here for video clips entitled 'Gunshot wound to the abdomen', 'Draining a collapsed lung' and 'Man wedged in an airshaft' alongside gruesome case studies. *Peak Practice* fans: you have been warned.

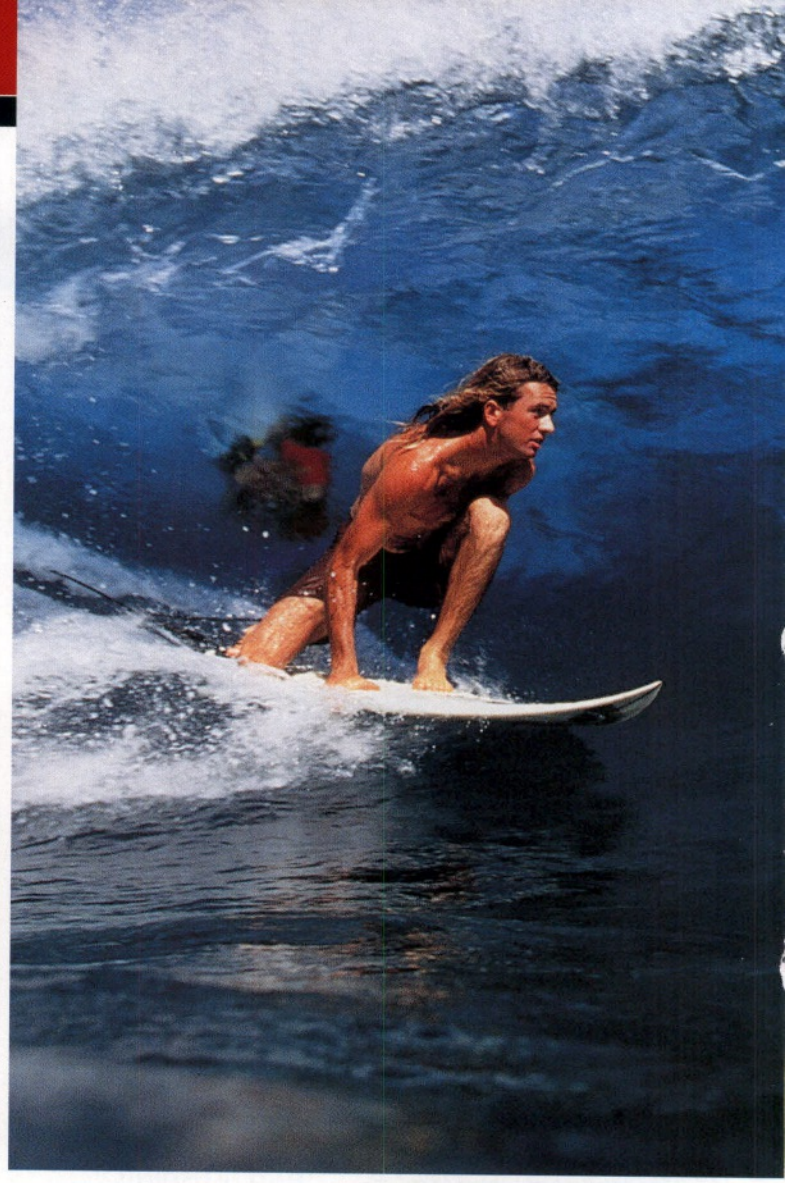
Wild Feed TV

www.wildfeedtv.com ★★★

What happens on the telly when the viewers aren't watching? The answer's here (sort of). *Wild Feed TV* records 'off-air transmissions' of live US feeds, revealing politicians' off-air comments, presenters' personal habits and the occasional controversial piece of gossip, too. There's only the odd snippet of content here, but it's more than worth a glance.

The other kinds of watersports

WAVES Waterskiing, rowing, octopushing... we've gathered together the best of the wet Web



BCU Internet

www.bcu.org.uk ★★★★

Home of the British Canoe Union, this is a fine first paddle on the Web for anyone with a penchant for canoeing or kayaking. Everything on it is functional, fuss-free and effective; there are plenty of helpful hints for those new to the canoe, covering types of craft, different disciplines, clubs, courses, where to go – and more. So now there's no excuse whatsoever not to take the sport up.

British Surfing Association Official Website

britsurf.co.uk ★★★

'Britsurf is under a major redesign' apparently, but there are ample resources on this clean and, most importantly, quick site. We wouldn't want to take sides in the surfers' Net war (see UK Surf Index), but this is aesthetically ahead of its antagonist. Click until your heart's content for pages galore on surf reports, beaches, news and, erm, 'stuff'. The latter offers strange Internet postcards – fat naked bloke, surfing hedgehog, somebody's pet cat... that kind of thing.

'Three six nine, the goose drank wi... Aaaargh!'

British Water Ski Online

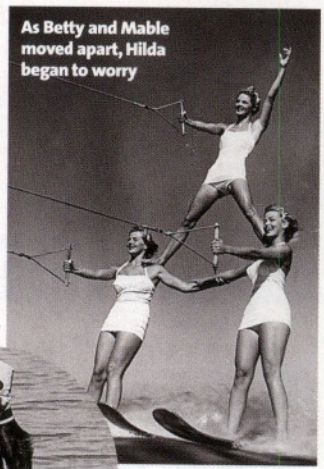
www.britishwaterski.co.uk ★★

If being lugged at a billion miles an hour across the waves on a rope is for you, visit here: the official site of the British Water Ski Federation. Its coverage is wide-ranging and all-encompassing, and it's pretty helpful (including downloads of all the necessary forms for competition licences, etc). But we found it in need of an update, with several dead links, while the overall tone is a bit dry (sorry) and worthy.

British Wave Ski Association

www.geocities.com/Pipeline/Halfpipe/1259/start.htm ★★

Wave ski (or waveski – they can't seem to make up their minds) looks a bit like a surfing/canoeing hybrid: the idea is to ride the breakers sitting astride and strapped to the board. But it's a global sport, and 'one of the best things for adrenaline rushes since sex', according to the author. Sounds good to us. The site design is pretty prosaic, but it's a solid resource for competitions, rankings, beginners' tips and plenty besides.



As Betty and Mable moved apart, Hilda began to worry

Between takes, Cheetah relaxed

Octobabes!

www.cix.co.uk/~clanger/octobabe/index.html ★★

Calm down – this isn't exactly what your average red-blooded male might imagine. It's actually 'a resource on the Net for all British women octopush players'. Never heard of it? Thought not – octopush is actually underwater hockey. Though the site is quite low-key, it includes useful tips on training, a 'Rogues' Gallery' of leading players and a photo album giving a glimpse of some of the lovely ladies both in and out of the water. However, the 'Social' page, intended to show 'what women octopush players do après-push', is still under construction. Shame.

Octopush Central

www.reedconsulting.com/octopush ★★

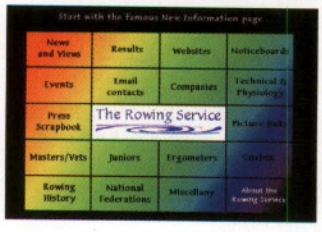
For anyone wishing to check out the merits of underwater hockey, this has to be a bookmark. But be warned: it's hard work to navigate, with a wash of unlabelled icons on the opening page. Delve under this unwelcoming surface, however, and there's plenty, from an explanation of this attractively-named sport to fixture lists, rules – and a surprisingly extensive list of links.

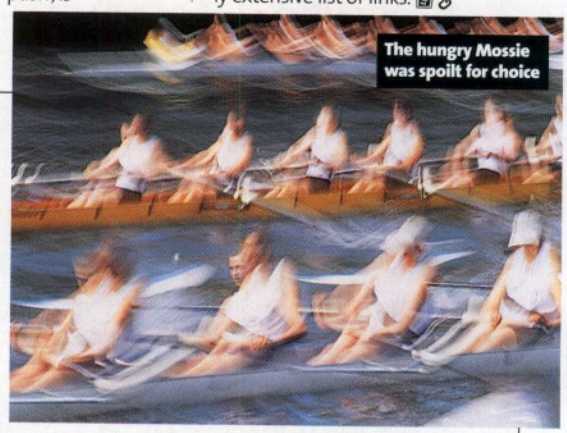
The Rowing Service

users.ox.ac.uk/~quarrell/index.html ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

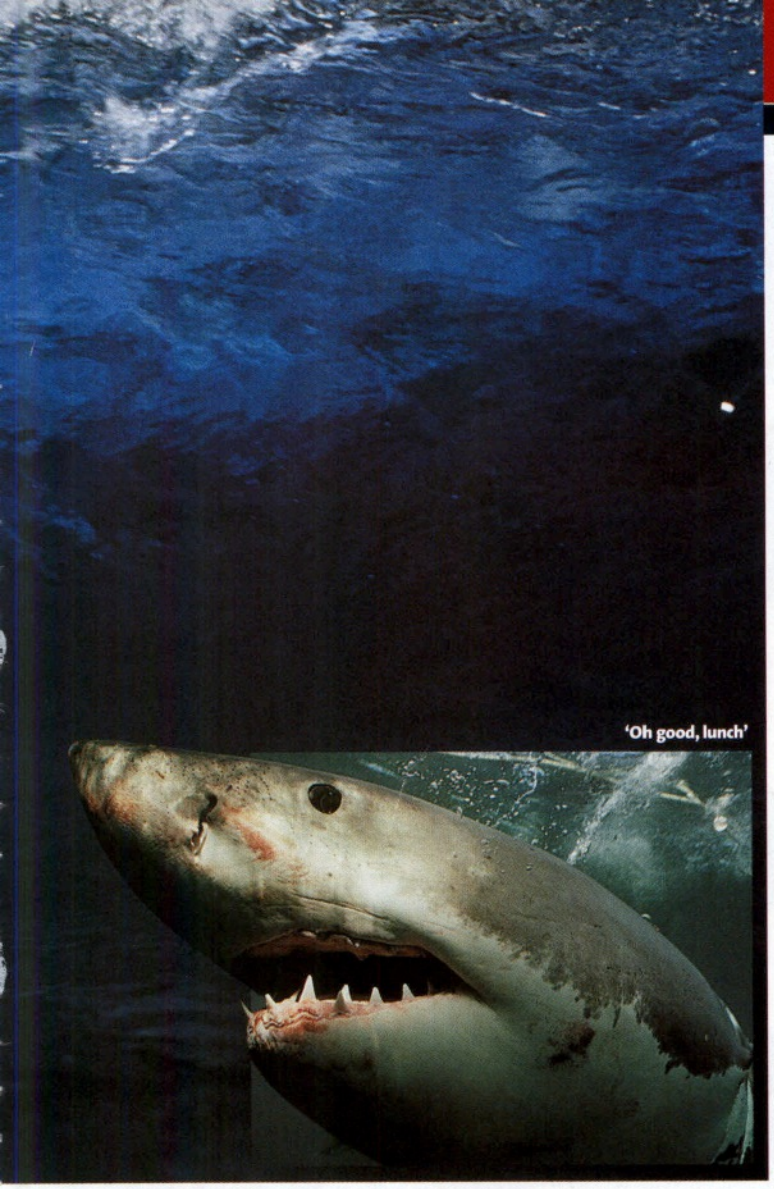
This is an exemplary Web site, with an elegantly minimalist design and excellent navigation. If rowing's your sport there's no better place to start, for The Rowing Service connects you to 'a thousand pages of rowing information and links', UK and worldwide. But there's more: a master page maps out main categories as plainly as you could ever hope for, and leads on to an absolute plethora of links and sub-indexes. As it says, 'the aim is to balance speed of loading with a quick route to the information you want to find,' and that's exactly what it does. There's no on-site gallery, but links connect you to numerous rowing images, including animations. What more could you ask for?





The hungry Mossie was spoilt for choice

WORDS: TERRY BENTLEY; PICTURES: IMAGEBANK, REX



'Oh good, lunch'

best sport sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND THE LATEST NEWS AND SCORES?

espn.go.com
Scores from every sport, plus news with a distinctly American bias.
www.sportlive.net
Express site with news and info.
www.soccernet.com
Scoreflashes from all UK games.
www.sporting-life.com
News, scores and betting advice.

FIND TOP FOOTBALL SITES?

www.football365.com
Humour, news and plenty of features from this popular site.
www.footballnews.co.uk
Now with added Des Lynam.
www.teamtalk.com
Exclusive news from major clubs.
www.soccer-links.com
Well-organised and searchable links for sites across the world.

PLACE AN ONLINE BET?

www.bluesq.com
The best-known and easiest-to-use online bookie.
www.victorchandler.com
User-friendly site from the traditional bookmakers.
www.sporting index.com
The biggest spread betting site.
www.willhill.com
From High Street bookies William Hill.

Place a bet on just about anything sporting at willhill.com

FOLLOW EVENTS LIVE?

www.planetfootball.com
Hub site for English football clubs' audio broadcasts.
www.sportlist.com
Guide to every sports show on British TV.
www.talksport.net
Listen to the national radio station's sports coverage live.
www.broadcast.com/sports/soccer
A variety of teams in RealAudio.

FIND THE BEST SITES FOR POPULAR SPORTS?

www.cricinfo.com
The Internet Movie Database of cricket sites.
www.planet-rugby.com
Comprehensive magazine on everything oval-balled.
www.pga.com
Golf's governing body scores a hole-in-one with this packed site.
www.boxingonline.com
The online king of the ring.

FIND FIXTURES?

www.sportcal.co.uk/public/online.htm
A list of events and sponsors for five years.
www.pa.press.net/sport/calendar
Useful guide to the forthcoming sporting year.
www.sportlive.net
Join here for your own email sports diary.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.surfing
The premier surfing newsgroup.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Talk to fellow waterskiers by sending an email marked 'subscribe waterski' to ***majordomo@duke.edu***

GET CHATTING?

www.boards.co.uk
A massive collection of forums where British windsurfers can natter.

Sheen Snr dreaded Barry's bathtimes

UK Surf Index

www.britsurf.org/UKSurfIndex ★★★
Believe it or not, there's rivalry in the online surfing world. 'Accept no pale imitation!' this site says. 'NOTE: this is NOT a BSA Web site.' And the British Surfing Association is omitted from its comprehensive list of links. Oh dear! There we were, thinking it was all about peace and love. What you get instead is a great dune of material, covering everything from weather to wetsuits. As an information source it's impressive, but visually it's messy, cluttered with sponsors' logos.

RYA

www.rya.org.uk ★★★★
Despite its name, the Royal Yacht Association isn't just about yachts (and certainly not just royal ones). A bit like an aquatic version of the RAC, the RYA acts as national governing body for various forms of competition in the drink. The front page takes a while to load, but you do get heaps of useful stuff: as well as sail racing, sections also cover windsurfing and powerboat-racing, with info on local clubs and classes, regional organisations, events, rules and a lot more besides.

Wild Water Racing

www.wwr.u-net.com ★★★
A site that speaks for itself. It's 'about racing canoes and kayaks down rapid rivers'. And 'it's deliberately low-tech – no frames, Java, heavy graphics or even background, just content. If you want information, it's here; if you want entertainment, go paddling!' Enough said. It ain't pretty, but it delivers.

Roseanne loved her emery board

SURFERS AGAINST SEWAGE

WATER WASTE

Rex's 'egg' went unnoticed in the Mersey

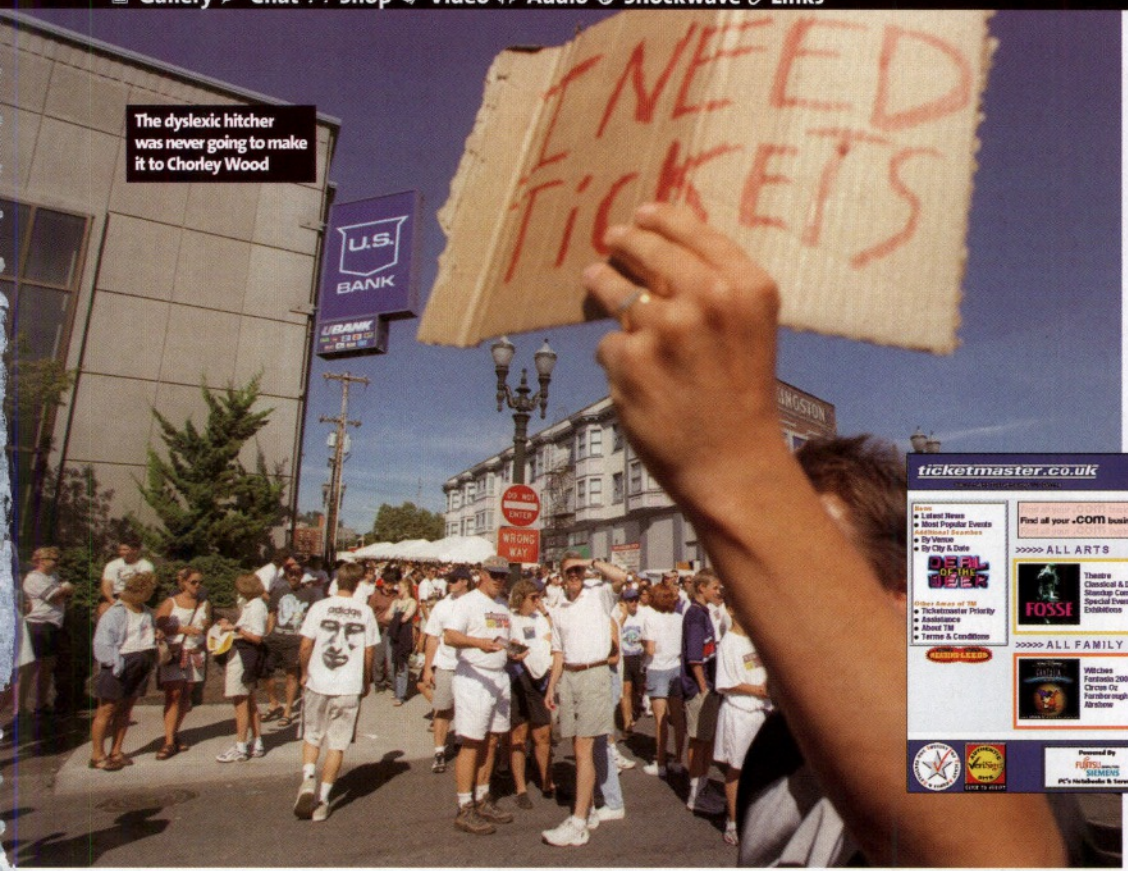
That's against as in 'not for' or 'opposing', rather than 'up close to', we'd like to make clear. This non-profit UK organisation (*www.sas.org.uk*) wants your support in campaigning to end the discharge of raw and partially-treated sewage and toxic waste into our seas and rivers. Ten years of pressure have resulted in the British government promising an £8.5 billion spend on cleaning up the aquatic environment, but the work's not over yet. Cack-free coastal and inland waters will allow future recreational water users to practise their sports without fear of getting ill. Join, or give a donation now.

It's now considered very PC to have a bet.

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

No Betting Shops.
No Jargon.
Bet Online at:

BLUE SQ
bluesq.com



The dyslexic hitcher was never going to make it to Chorley Wood

Ticketmaster

www.ticketmaster.co.uk/sports

★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

As the country's biggest ticket agency, Ticketmaster was always in danger of being usurped by some of the new wave of young Internet pups. Fortunately, its transition online has been remarkably smooth: indeed, the site offers significantly quicker results than the phone alternatives. Most of the biggest events are available, and the speed and ease of use impresses. See also *www.ticketmaster.com*, where tickets can be purchased for worldwide events in the click of a mouse.

'Anyone need a ticket?'

BUYING TICKETS Can the Net bring the days of queuing in the rain to an end?

2-tickets.com

www.2-tickets.com ★★★

One to bookmark, this: though the range of tickets at the moment is decidedly limited, 2-tickets promises rapid expansion. And despite being an American-based site, you can pick up cheap tickets for US and worldwide events wherever you are. Already there are boxing, NFL and F1 bargains to be had.

Ambro Sports Corporate Hospitality

www.ambro-sports.com ★★★

Even if you regard corporate hospitality at major sporting events to be unredeemably evil, you can't fail to be swayed by the range on offer here – and if you've left booking too late, you might have no option but to shell out for an executive box if you simply have to see the match. No online ordering, but fill in the enquiry form for rapid results.

'Make that, "To Mitch..."'

Fan Fare Events

www.fanfare-events.com ★★★★

Ever had a yearning to jet off to Brazil and catch a game at the Maracana? Or how about watching MLS matches in Los Angeles? This well-designed little site makes it possible: Fan Fare sells package deals to football matches around the world, including flights and accommodation. Naturally, you'll need a fair few quid spare in order to indulge, but as wistful window-shopping this really can't be beaten.

First Call Tickets

www.firstcalltickets.com ★★★★

It's always an advantage, when preparing to send cash off into cyberspace, if the site looks slightly more professional than something thrown together in Geocities by a bored 13-year-old. And First Call is a corker – online ordering couldn't be smoother, with extra points for a ticket auction option.

The Full Monty queue rejects

best sport sites ★★★★★

where can I...

JOIN A TEAM?

www.sportlive.net

Check out the 'grass roots' section for links to hundreds of local teams.

www.intheteam.com

Build yourself a mini-site for your club, featuring news and fixtures.

BUY ACCESSORIES ONLINE?

www.newitts.com

Great online sports store.

www.sportspages.co.uk

Net bookshop specialising in sporting titles.

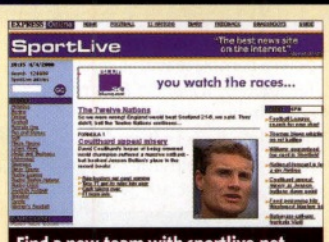
LEARN A MARTIAL ART?

www.blackbeltmag.com

Choose your fighting discipline then master the basics here.

www.kungfu.cc

Kung-fu course with online tutorials.



Find a new team with sportlive.net

LEARN THE RULES?

www-uk.cricket.org

Cricket's home page explains the lbw rule for confused Americans.

www.referee.com

You're certain to get your rule questions answered here.

FIND A NEW SPORT?

www.sportszine.co.uk

Comprehensive links to UK sites, from athletics to wrestling.

www.sports365.co.uk

Great new sport portal that's full of interesting links and loads of information.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

rec.sport.soccer

Avoid loneliness – find some travelling companions for those foreign trips.

GET CHATTING?

www.4-lane.com/sportschat/

Boards for 20 popular sports.

Looking for more Sport sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 116

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY; PICTURES: REX, PA, EMPICS

'The truth? You can't handle the truth!'

Elvis has left the building

ELVIS He might have popped his clogs over 20 years ago, but on the Net the King is as big a star as ever...

Elvis: a big fan of Supergrass

Ask the King

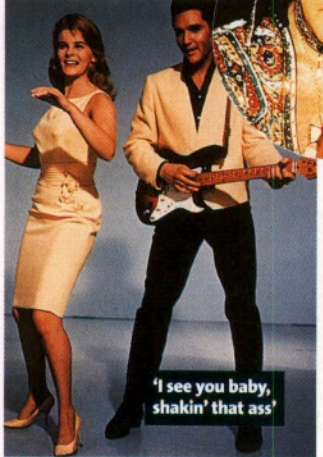
www.mgm.com/elvis/ask ★★★★

'Cross my heart/Hope to die/I won't tell you no lies,' croons this oracular Elvis, tucked away in a long-forgotten corner of the official MGM site. Type in a question for the turban-sporting King and he'll be giving you his advice in a jiffy. Cheesier than the Cheddar Gorge Visitors Centre, but it still had us enthralled all afternoon.

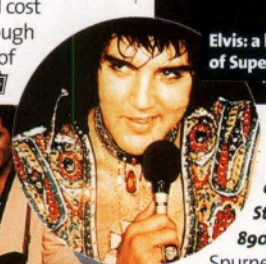
Collecting Elvis

homei.gte.net/eap ★★★

Dorothy's life was changed, aged seven, when she saw Elvis in concert. Now she's all grown up, but her heart still belongs to the King – and to prove it she's put her huge collection of Elvis memorabilia online, complete with a price guide. Tempted by a Dancin' Elvis music box? Find out what it'll cost here, then browse through terrifying galleries full of busts and velvet 'art'.



'I see you baby, shakin' that ass'



The E-Tabs!

www.geocities.com/Bourbon Street/Quarter/8904 ★★★

Spurned by serious axemen, tabs – an idiot's guide to guitar strummage – are a boon if you've got fingers like chipolatas. Treat the family to an evening of Elvis thanks to this database of King classics. All together now: 'You know he's [A7]gone, gone, gone, [G7]hipshaking King Cre[D]ole. [G7][A7].'

Elvex Pages

www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Alley/8250/epl.html ★★★★★

From his Dutch hideaway, Lex Raaphorst has put together a humungous site packed with Elvis goodness. Highlights include a complete set of the King's movie posters and album covers, an exhaustive cross-referenced discography, hundreds of CDs and cassettes to buy via the CDNow site, plus a database of 700 lyrics searchable by title, decade, session, album and even phrase. Grab yourself a big, fat cheeseburger and enjoy.

WORDS: MATTHEW BINGHAM; PICTURES: KOBAL MOVIESTORE, REX

Elvis Presley Theme Page

elvis.findhere.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Worried about computer security? Don't bother getting to grips with PGP – *the net* recommends the Elvis Decoder Ring, 'which allows you and another devotee to send secret messages only The King can decode.' It's just one of hundreds of free downloads from this rockin' software archive. Best of all are three digital answerphone messages. 'Give Elvis control of your desktop,' it says on the site. We can only agree.

JR just loved to sing and dance

ElvisFind

elvisfind.tcb.nu

★★★★

Navigate your way across the Web with ElvisFind, the specialist Presley search engine. Fifty-five sites intelligently reviewed on content and presentation, all searchable by keyword. Simple, but brilliant.

Elvis' Women

greggers.granitecity.com/elvis/women ★★★

With the exception of early classics like *King Creole* and *Jailhouse Rock*, Elvis's film career was pure cheesecake. But his movies did launch the careers of actresses like Teri Garr and Raquel Welsh (both debuted in *Roustabout* in 1964), and you can see them in this homage site to his leading ladies. Then buy the videos – if you dare.

Graceland

photo.net/summer94/graceland.html ★★

If you want to wander around Graceland but don't fancy three hours under the Memphis sun with a bunch of polyester-clad grannies, take a virtual tour. Philip Greenspun's pin-sharp photos will transport you right into the King's home. Magic.

The (Unofficial) Elvis Home Page

metalab.unc.edu/elvis ★★★★

This jamboree bag of Elvis-related fun won't win any awards for design and navigation, but if you want to correspond with a Presley pen-pal, browse through hundreds of links, read some execrable poetry and look at the King's last will and testament, here's where to go.

ELVIS'S MANAGEMENT

MAJOR TOM

Born Andreas van Kujik in Breda, Holland, Colonel Parker took his name from his commanding officer in the US Army. On discharge in 1926, he found his calling as a fairground hustler. When appointed dogcatcher of Tampa, Florida, Parker founded the world's first pet cemetery in the grounds of his animal shelter. Money-making scams included putting down puppies and making chickens dance on a hotplate. It was all good training for his ultimate vocation: managing the career of Elvis Aaron Presley for 23 years, during which he turned his charge from small-town crooner into superstar. For the full story go to *www.elvispresleyonline.com/html/tom_parker.html*

'I was just keeping it warm for you, sir'

best celebrities sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND GOOD GOSSIP?

www.mrshowbiz.com
The fastest track to loads of gossip, with the odd exclusive, too.
www.celebritypalace.com
Plenty of gossip, plus links and resources.

FIND A STAR'S ADDRESS?

www.barringtons.com/EmailDir
Impressively lengthy list of addresses – verified and unofficial.
www.celebrityemail.com
Over 14,000 celebs on its pages, from supermodels to princes. Forwards your messages automatically.

READ MAGAZINES?

www.eonline.com
The latest happenings in the worlds of music, TV, film and video.
www.people.com
Online version of the popular US *People* magazine.

FIND CELEBRITY HOME PAGES?

www.celebsites.com
Links to official sites of celebs from all walks of fame.
www.celebhoo.com
Useful new search engine for all relevant information.

MEET MY HERO?

www.yack.com
Updated list of celebrity events.
www.iknewthemwhen.com
The stars before they were famous.

The fame game: iknewthemwhen.com

BUY CELEBRITY ITEMS?

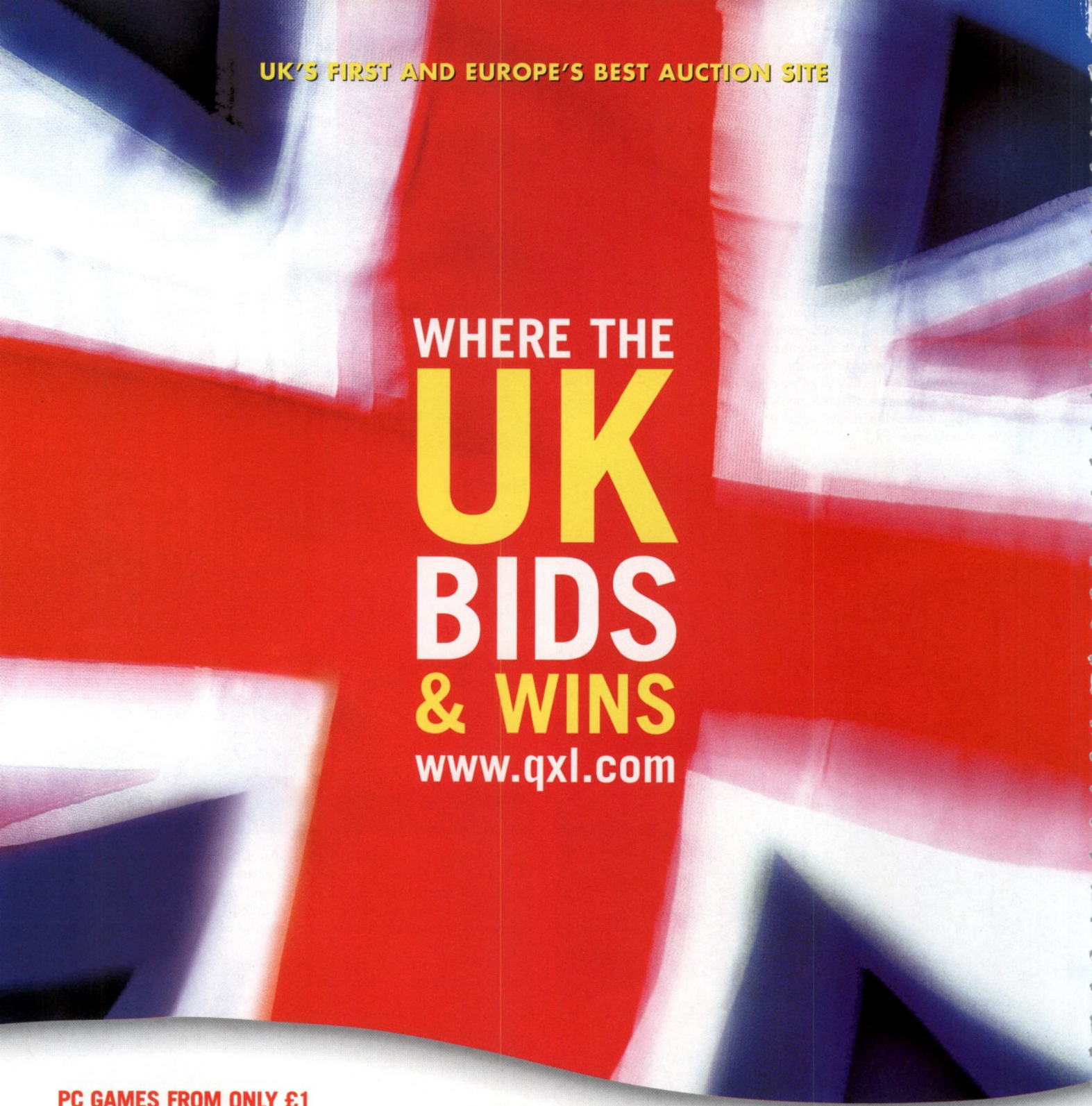
celebrityconnection.com/index.html
Buy and sell autographs, memorabilia, props and wardrobes.
www.starzstuff.com
All sorts of memorabilia from the world of movies, TV and music.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.fan.elvis-presley
A massive community of Elvis fans.

GET CHATTING?

www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Balcony/1441/index.html
An Elvis-specific chat room.



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QXL.com online auctions

www.qxl.com/thenet

The shows must go on

WEB SOAPS If you're tired of *EastEnders*, look no further than your PC for the best new soap operas

About Schuyler Falls

www.skyfalls.com ★★★★

Now in its third season (making it considerably more successful than *Eldorado*), *Schuyler Falls* will delight devotees of trashy daytime soap *Sunset Beach*. Highbrow it ain't, but this quaint drama is oddly compelling. Check out the music and picture gallery.

Austin

www.internetv.com/austin ★★★★

A bright twentysomething drama about US flatmates – think of it as MTV's *The Real World* without the whining – *Austin* was the first Web soap, and uses Real Video to great effect in a rolling series of updates.

You'll need patience, but this slice of realism with a dash of glamour is well worth the wait.

Knots Landing Reborn

newspartners.net/KLReborn ★★★★

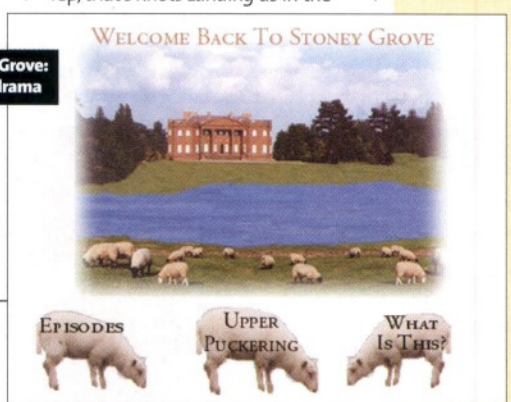
Yep, that's *Knots Landing* as in the much-missed 80s daytime classic and *Dallas* spin-off. A devoted fan has kept the flame burning by carrying on where the storyline left off, creating completely new scripts and characters. And, incredibly, it's just as anodyne as the original. Remarkable.

Knots Landing: yes, it lives on!

Labors Of Love

members.tripod.com/~onlinesoap/index.html ★★★

Just as TV couldn't exist without the watered-down pap that populates the daytime schedules, so Web telly has imported its own brand of cheese – *Labors Of Love*. Fans of overblown storylines and hyperactive characters need look no further than this casino-set melodrama. More discerning viewers, however, might prefer to give it a wide berth...



Stoney Grove: wooly drama

Stoney Grove

www.stoneygrove.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

As a rule, Web soaps come packaged either as weekly Real Video episodes or as a complex text-based narrative. *Stoney Grove*, however, combines the best of both worlds to spectacular effect. The work of an Anglo-American couple, it's set in the fictional Sussex village of Upper Puckering and follows the lives of the occupants of the 'Big House'. Interactive floorplans and walk-through rooms, combined with a tourist guide to the village and even a fully-updated local paper, make Stoney Grove a real treat – not to mention surprisingly addictive for *Emmerdale* lovers.

'Come on, you don't use Clearasil, do you?'

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY; PICTURES: CHANNEL 4

best news sites ★★★★★ where can I...

READ THE NEWS?

www.newsnow.com

All the headlines fit to print, in one handy package.

pa.press.net

Vast array of news-related services, including a desktop ticker and diary.

GET AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE?

www.reuters.com/news

The massive news agency provides rolling headlines and news by topic.

www.cnn.com

A comprehensive news service.

GET A DIFFERENT SPIN?

www.drudgereport.com

American columnist who broke the Clinton scandal – and more.

www.thesmokinggun.com

Material from US government and law enforcement sources.

FIND LOCAL NEWS?

www.thisis.co.uk

Add the name of your city or county (eg ***www.thisisessex.co.uk***) for local news and chat.

www.ecola.com/news/press/eu/uk

Directory of UK regional papers.

FIND WEATHER & TRAVEL?

www.wunderground.com

Current conditions and a forecast for any location, anywhere, in colour.

News in B&W: www.drudgereport.com

www.theaa.co.uk/motoring/ukroads/traffic.asp

Roadworks, closures and delays.

COMPILE MY OWN NEWS PAGES?

www.crayon.net

Aka 'Create Your Own Newspaper'. Build your own daily digest of headlines.

my.yahoo.com

Personalise a Yahoo! page to get the news you want, when you want it.

JOIN A NEWSGROUP?

uk.media

Vent your spleen on the media here.

FIND A MAILING LIST?

Try ***www.itn.co.uk/desktopnews/webpage/preferences.htm*** for daily news.

GET CHATTING?

www.news.bbc.co.uk

Head for the 'Talking Point'...

Looking for more News sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 116

'Best avoid the chef's special...'

'If you're ever in the area...'

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES Before you try a new destination, ask those who've been before

Arthur Frommer's Travel Online

www.frommers.com ★★★

Sandwiched between 'Say Yes to Yosemite' and 'Arthur's Tip of the Day' is 'Travel Message Boards', where the (mostly American) contributors pass comment on their travels. Rather worryingly, Great Britain seems to inspire a large amount of concern, concentrating mainly on our hotel standards – or lack of.

John Connor's Real Travel Stories

www.geocities.com/~travelstories ★★★

'I have travelled all over the world,' is the slightly misleading introduction, as Mr Connor quickly changes that to: 'OK, North America plus one trip to Europe.' Get over the disappointment and read about his 'adventures'. Despite going into great detail about irrelevant points, these are strangely compelling tales.

Real Holiday Guide

www.realholidayguide.co.uk ★★★★

A sound idea, giving holidaymakers the chance to let others know about their trips. Thankfully, this is done via a form, thus sparing the reader endless detail about the 'hilarious' incidents that occurred in Majorca/Mombasa/wherever.

Round-The-World Travel Guide

www.travel-library.com/rtw/html/faq.html ★★★★

For sheer inspiration on the round-the-world travel front, log on here. There are loads of reports on what

Lonely Planet Online

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

www.lonelyplanet.co.uk ★★★★★

Not the place to go for advice on five-star luxury villas in Spain, but if you want the low-down on hanging out in Haiti for a few months or feel like contributing to the debate on the pros and cons of Cuba, log on here. Seasoned travellers give the gossip in the Thorn Tree and Postcards sections, advise on places to try (and, more importantly, those to miss) and tell of the latest political unrest. An excellent site from one of the best guidebook publishers in the business.

'Stunning local scenery...'

QUALITY CONTROL
Factors that can affect flash pictures
*Too close - prints too light, lacking detail
*Too far away - prints too dark and lacking detail
*Incorrect flash synchronisation - refer to camera instructions
ADVICE LABEL
LIFT & PEEL HERE

backpacking is really like, and helpful hints on everything from making the initial decision to what to do on your return (save for the next trip, apparently).

Strange (But True) Travel Stories

www.cyber-adv.com/strange.htm
★★
This site wanted 'strange, hilarious or unbelievable' stories sent in but – as it's discovered – you don't always get what you want. It's basically just a collection of travel essays. The quantity is fine – there are plenty of foreign tales – but quality appears to be a problem. 'Strange' appears occasionally ('A September to Remember' manages to be both touched *and* touching) while the 'unbelievable' criteria is reached by most. The hilarity quota, however, is non-existent.

The Travelling Writer

www.ibnd.com/index/index.html
★★
Heading for Canada? Then check out this site belonging to ageing hippie Tom Wagner. Read the comments on various areas posted by fellow visitors, and get an idea on what's worth seeing and what's not. But move further down and the site becomes Mr Wagner's personal bitching forum. Government, metrification, shellfish (don't ask)... you name it, he's got a few words to say about it.

TravelPage.com

www.travelpage.com ★★★
Another American site, and as such the holiday reviews concentrate on the US's own doorstep, with the occasional trip to the Caribbean. As well as some useful comments on various places, this well laid-out site also includes some good travel deals. But of all the reviews, perhaps the best listing is for London, written by an American. The 'official language' is apparently British English (but no information regarding the unofficial language), and the most famous accent is Cockney, spoken by people living in the East End. Now we know.

Travel Stories With Useful Info

www.xs4all.nl/~pdeb/ ★★★★
Does exactly what it says. A retired Dutch airline engineer reminisces about the countries he's visited, and writes informatively on an impressive array of them. (Unintentional) humour is provided by the translation into English of his general information pages, with gems such as 'breeding of birds: special Canaries to cheer up the garden'. But don't worry – he had help translating the travel stories.

LIFT & PEEL HERE
QUALITY CONTROL
Red/Yellow overall cast to prints
Film exposed under tungsten light, or early morning/late afternoon sunlight.
Warning: Fluorescent lights give prints a yellow/green cast.
ADVICE LABEL

Usit Campus

www.usitcampus.co.uk ★★★
All you ever wanted to know about American food but were too afraid to ask. In the travellers' tales section, Nicola dedicates her entire review to the joys of New York's culinary offerings, beginning with deli sandwiches. A burger delux, muffins and Atomic Chicken feature as snacks, before rounding the day (and her figure) off with an Italian feast at Carmines. The travellers' site features other reviews, but this was the only gastronomic tour of an entire city.

ONE WOMAN'S TRAVELS

BIRD'S MIGRATION

Isabella Lucy Bird was the original – an intrepid female adventurer of the late 19th century. Travel was prescribed by her doctor as a cure for illness, so in an age when women barely ventured out of their homes alone, Isabella went round the globe. Both insightful (she found Australia to be 'hideous') and hardy, she visited Egypt and Korea among other places, while in China – unused to Westerners – she was accused of being a 'child-catcher'. See *www.geocities.com/Wellesley/7385* for a fascinating account of her life, with details of her books.

best travel sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND THE BEST HOLIDAY AND FLIGHT DEALS?

expedia.co.uk
Microsoft's flights and holidays site.
www.a2btravel.co.uk
Britain's biggest online travel agent.
www.myownprice.com
Name the price you want to pay for a flight – the site will try to match it.
www.deckchair.com
Minimalist flight-finder from mop-haired Sir Bob Geldof.
www.travelocity.co.uk
Large holiday portal with competitive prices.

GET DESTINATION INFO?

www.t-e.co.uk
A great resource for travelogues, advice and guides.
www.roughguides.com
From the publishers of the guides.
www.whatsonwhen.com
A diary of worldwide events – useful when planning your trip.

GET DOS AND DON'TS?

www.etravel.org
A neat and tidy online travel mag, with plenty of handy tips.
www.tips4trips.com
1000 handy 'tips for trips', categorised for easy access.
www.fco.gov.uk/travel
Get the official word on countries before setting off – maybe you shouldn't even be going there.
www.travel-news.org
Good source of independent news for British travellers.

FIND ACCOM-MODATION?

www.placestostay.com
Whether it's the Bahamas or Bangkok, this should find you a suitable place to rest.
www.cottage-net.ndirect.co.uk
Fancy an away-from-it-all country cottage? Then try this huge self-catering database.
www.smoothhound.co.uk
A guide to B&Bs and hotels across the whole of the UK.

SPEND A DAY OUT IN BRITAIN?

www.LondonTown.com/index2.html
Everything there is to do and see in the Big Smoke.
www.virgin.net/daysout
Great ideas and tips for days out throughout the UK, from those helpful people at Virgin.
www.knowhere.co.uk
A brutally honest guide to the boring towns and backwaters of Britain.

Find the best time to travel: see whatsonwhen.com

www.britainexpress.com
A jam-packed UK travel and heritage guide. Where to go, and lots of background info and articles on where you're going.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

rec.travel.air
Swap hints and tips on air travel and airlines.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

To join the Internet Travel Network list, send an email marked 'subscribe itn-talk' to ***listserv@sunnyside.com***

GET CHATTING?

www.travelchannel.com
Wherever you've been or wherever you're going, you can talk about it and share travel tips here.

Looking for more Travel sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 116

WORDS: CLAIRE MCHATTIE; PICTURES: MOVIESTORE COLLECTION, PA, REX FEATURES

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Them.

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Which airline do you prefer? Unlike our competitors we offer tickets for all the major carriers and most of the smaller ones as well.

How much would you like to pay? Our Bid & Go service allows you to state your preferred price for a seat which we will then negotiate with the airline on your behalf.

Are you concerned about making a purchase over the internet? We are a licensee of the Trust security network which guarantees secure encryption of all your details from the moment you log on to our website.

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There was never a dull moment on the Mark & Lard show

'Now this might hurt...'

TATTOOS Ever had a yearning for body adornment? Be sure to surf before you buy

BME: Body Modification E-zine

www.bme.freeq.com ★★★★

It's always best to learn from someone else's experiences; the BME is one of the best places to do so, with a list of personal tattoo tales so you can find out how much it will – or won't – hurt. There's chat and a question section, and if tattoos aren't enough you can always read about piercings. Be warned, though: some of it's not for the faint-hearted – or for children.

Ming's novelty vases never took off

Club Tattude

www.tattude.com ★★★

You have to feel for poor Connie; she lives in Oklahoma, where, believe it or not, tattooing is still illegal. She sports eight tattoos herself and the site boasts some large, categorised galleries, as well as a guestbook where you can leave your opinion. Which is exactly what 'Paul' did, claiming that next time he'd 'give the words a miss, and focus on the pictures'. Charming.

Henna Galerie Germany

home.germany.net/100-372416/index engl.html ★★

Want a tattoo but scared you'll hate it in a few weeks? Then go for the temporary alternative of henna. It might be German but this site has great designs – as well as a weekly special and two galleries. Madonna's done it, so it must be cool – and anyway, you can get shot of it in the morning.

Mad Thad's Tattoo E-zine

www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Club/6411 ★★★

Somehow the word 'submission'

Tattoo Studios

www.tattoostudios.com ★★★★★

Look out! As The Offspring warbled: 'He's getting a tattoo, yeah/He's getting ink done/He asked for a 13, but they drew a 31.' Avoid such a permanent *faux pas* by steering clear of dodgy 'artists' and following the sound advice of Tattoo Studios. Scan the excellent FAQ section, including the all-important 'can a tattoo be removed?', then pay a visit to the gallery to see readers' tattoos, such as Tod and his Microsoft logo and Amanda's portrait of Susan Sarandon. Who said tattoos weren't scary?

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

'I fell asleep on the beach, officer, and when I woke up...'

WORDS: SARAH WAKELY; PICTURES: PA, REX, SIPA PRESS

your safety net on the net

The Net, or Web, is a largely unregulated place.

Even governments can't control the information flow, which is great for free speech and freedom of expression.

But the other side of your hard earned coin means that people have a real cause for concern when it comes to buying on-line.

Will my details remain confidential? Will the goods be delivered on time? Where can I go for redress?

That's where Trust-On-Line comes in. We protect and secure your on-line purchases of goods and services.

Every time you buy from an accredited Trust-On-Line shop, click on our logo (usually found in the checkout area) and your statutory rights will be protected.

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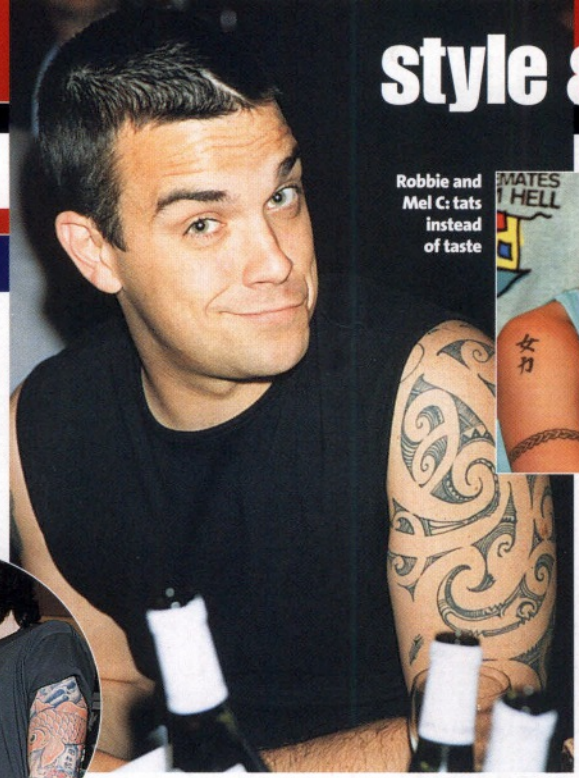
trust-on-line.com

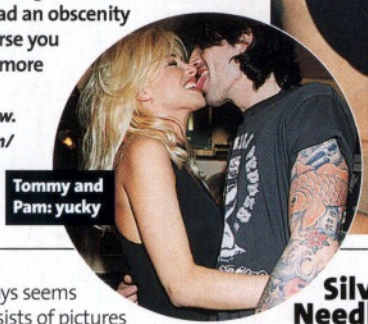
CELEBRITY TATS

STARS AND SCARS

There's no denying that tattoos are the body mutilation of the moment: you can't open a magazine without some celebrity's body art peering back at you. Everyone knows that Mel C has 'Angel' on her navel and Robbie Williams has a Maori tat on his arm, but did you know that Josef Stalin was etched with a pic of a death's head? Or that the *X-Files*' Scully has an 'evil tattoo of a snake eating its own tail'? Or that Robert Mitchum had an obscenity on his arm? Of course you didn't. All this and more useless tattoo information at ***www.vanishingtattoo.com/celebrity_tattoos.htm***. Now you can sleep in peace.



Robbie and Mel C: tats instead of taste



Tommy and Pam: yucky

enthusiasts and artists – meet and interact with the messageboard and guestbook (actually a gallery). It's US-biased, but the monthly archived galleries are excellent, as are the links to the top 100 tattoo, music and biker sites.

Tattoo Talk

www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/Delta/2512 ★★

Let Mike and his buddy Keith be your guides around the big scary world of tattoos; they'll show you their chums' tats, including Hank's, Bert's and Afi's. It's not very extensive but there are some good pictures – just don't let the fact that on a tattoo site always seems apt. Mad Thad's consists of pictures of people's tats; there's also a featured artist, an archive and the explanation of why Thad is Mad – 'as you can see, the 'Mad' means crazy, not angry.' Thankfully, he's an enthusiast and not an artist.

Silver Needles

www.silverneedles.com ★★★

You'd want a company that's going to give you a piece of ever-lasting body art to have a well-designed Web site, and Silver Needles has just that. Galleries of the work of the two artists sit happily alongside info on aftercare, and pictures of needles buzz as you run the cursor over them. Hold still now...

Tattoo Spa

tattoospa.com ★★★★

Tattoo Spa is a cosy community of they look like the Chuckle Brothers put you off.

Da Vinci did his finest work in a draught

Kids and felt tips, eh!

best fashion sites ★★★★★

where can I...

BUY CLOTHES ONLINE?

www.tops.co.uk
Get all the latest goodies from Top Shop and Top Man without having to go there.

www.boo.com
The online sports clothing superstore.

www.designerheaven.co.uk
Where you can buy well-known men's brands online.

FIND THE LATEST FASHION NEWS?

www.fashion-icon.com
Ranging from street style to interiors – all the latest trends.

www.fbia.com
The Fashion and Beauty Internet Association's hub of fashion info.

www.cnn.com/style
Well-informed fashion news, including video clips.

SEE THE LATEST FASHION SHOWS?

www.firstview.com/home.html
Look at thousands of pictures from those latest and greatest crazy catwalk collections.

www.fashion.net/shows
View videos of all the latest fashion shows as they roll off the catwalk.

www.ftv.fr
Catch catwalk shows broadcast daily on RealVideo.

Fashion tips? You need cosmomag.com

READ FASHION DOS AND DON'TS?

www.manslife.com/clothes
If you think men's fashion is an oxymoron, visit soon.

www.beautynet.com
Having a bad hair day? Run out of ideas for improvement? Drop by this no-frills site for advice.

www.cosmomag.com
Get the tips straight from the horse's mouth.

GET AN ONLINE MAKEOVER?

www.compucloz.com
Try one for free online. Hours of fun.

www.makemeover.com
Change your image today by simply using a photograph.

www.virtualmakeover.com
Buy the software you need to change your image.

JOIN A NEWSGROUP?

rec.arts.bodyart
Talk to other people before you take the leap into body adornment.

GET CHATTING?

www.bodyartweb.com
Features a chat room for tattoo fans.

Terry was furious at June's new look

Tattoos.com

tattoos.com ★★★★

There must be a hell of a lot of people with tattoos: this site has received well over six million hits. It's not surprising, though, as it's extremely thorough, with articles, galleries, links, a chat room and a book store. Best of all, though, has to be the live Web cams of people getting their tats done.

Zulu Tattoo

www.zulutattoo. com ★★★★

Despite the back-to-nature style of this site, tattoos aren't just for blokes. As a comment in the guestbook says, Marte and Meghan 'had the ultimate mother/daughter experience – getting decorated together'. There's help with selecting an artist, and aftercare advice such as 'do not pick or scratch scabs'. Grrr.

WORDS: SARAH WAKELY. PICTURES: REX, SIPA PRESS

BETTER BANKING.
BETTER RATES.
BETTER SMILE.

smile is the revolutionary new way to bank on-line. It's direct, secure and offers great rates for customers. As a smile current account holder you'll benefit from **4.85% gross AER** interest and **6% gross AER** on your savings. And if you don't have a smile current account, you'll still benefit from impressive rates, like our loans, which start from just **8.5% APR.** Open your account on-line now and we'll even transfer your old one for you – hassle free. So, whatever you do – smile.

www.smile.co.uk

.co.uk

smile the internet bank

from The Co-operative Bank

Gross means the contractual rate of interest payable before the deduction of income tax at the specified by law. AER means annual equivalent rate and is the notional rate which illustrates the contractual interest rate as if paid and compounded on an annual basis. Interest is credited monthly. smile current accounts require a minimum monthly credit of £1000. Interest rates are variable. Interest rates and APRs on personal loans are fixed for the term of the loan. Written quotations are available on request from smile at PO Box 600, Delf House, Skelmersdale, WN8 6GF. Credit facilities are subject to status and not available to anyone under 18 years of age. The Co-operative Bank p.l.c. reserves the right to decline any application. All interest rates correct at 11.02.00.

What a bunch of bankers

INTERNET BANKING With a new online bank opening every week, where's the best place for your money?

Barclays

www.ibank.barclays.co.uk ★★

Oddly, the site loads to reveal a woman about to hurl herself off a cliff. In their TV campaign Barclays claims to have the world's biggest online bank; strictly speaking they offer Web banking for branch customers, but no online bank yet.

Barclays: jump, you bugger!

Egg

www.egg.com ★★★

Not long ago it was the best the Net had, but now the site is slow and looks dated. Still offers one of the best interest rates for savers, though.

First Direct

www.firstdirect.com

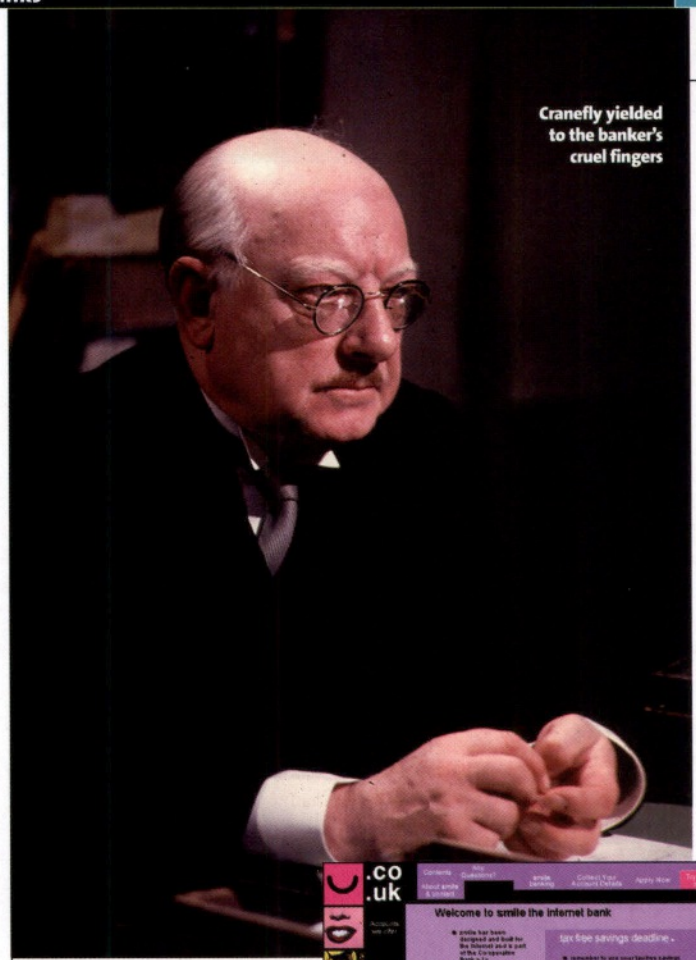
★★★★

If you can take the horrible digital puppet – the bald thing that looks like William Hague crossed with Chucky – then check out the site, because it's cool and nippy, and First Direct is launching interactive TV banking this summer. Next time your bank manager snarls at you, remind him that all this innovation spells 'P45' for the likes of him.

First-e

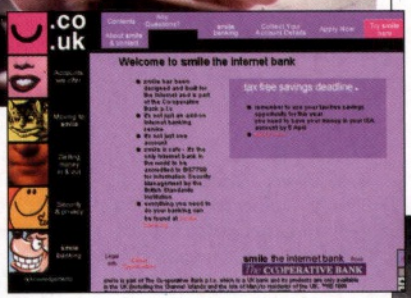
www.firste.com ★★★

Our Gallic cousins are muscling in on the action; with interest rates of 6.69 percent on savings and a wide range of services, you can expect millions of pounds to be winging its way across La Manche. The site looks foreign, too – well, French (all pastels) – but since Banque d'Escompte is the current market leader on savings account interest rates, who cares?


Cranefly yielded to the banker's cruel fingers

Smile

www.smile.co.uk ★★★★★



Fast, bright and miles ahead of the competition – it should consider changing its name to Smirk. Whereas most online banks are still just a new way for Net users to manage their high street bank accounts, Smile is an Internet-only bank from the Co-op. What's more, it doesn't just offer the bog-standard current account, but a wide range of other services too. Best of all, Smile is passing on its savings to its customers; the current account pays interest at a staggering 4.07 percent, compared with the standard 0.1 percent or so you get from the likes of Lloyds TSB or Barclays.

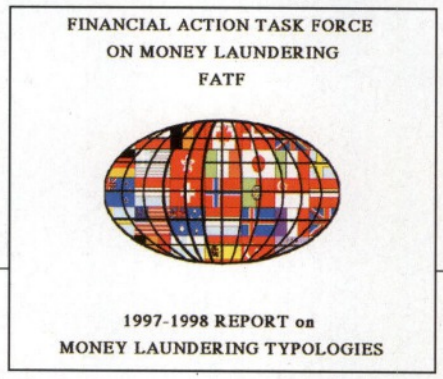
thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

The Beckhams spared no expense when building their new wall

DODGY BANKERS

TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN

If you're thinking of banking online, it might be best to stick with household names and steer well clear of banks registered in Antigua whose directors spend long weekends in Moscow. In August 1997, the world's first online 'bank', the Antiguan-based European Union Bank, went bust, and its two Russian founders mysteriously disappeared with all the dosh. Antigua has since been accused by both the British and US authorities of allowing Russian organised crime figures to open banks to launder the profits from drug trafficking. The United States Treasury revealed the truth about the so-called European Union Bank in their 1997 report on international money laundering. Read all about it at *www.ustreas.gov/fincen/typo97en.html*.



F-Sharp

www.fsharpbank.com
★★★★

A sharp idea from the Bank of Ireland: an online, offshore account for customers living abroad or planning to leave the UK. If that's you, then this site's worth checking out. New account holders also get a free tax consultation with KPMG.

Halifax

www.halifax-online.co.uk

Boring! Another money-management site... but watch this space. In October Halifax announced it was going to launch a proper Internet bank at a cost of £850 million. The result is WebSaver, opening in April. Interest rates weren't available at the time of writing, but expect them to rival those of Egg.

Lloyds TSB Online

www.lloydstsb.co.uk ★★

Lloyds TSB say they are going to launch a stand-alone Net account later in the year, but for now you'll have to settle for this. If you're a Lloyds customer then managing your account will be easier, but you might want to ask why it takes five working days to transfer cash from your account to someone else's.

Royal Bank of Scotland's PC Banking

www.royalbankscot.co.uk ★★

What's the difference between PC and online banking? Not a lot, by all accounts. This is a predictable, no-frills site for accessing statements, transferring cash and paying bills – just the same as the other High Street names who save money when you bank on the Net, and pass on none of those savings to you. And if you're on a Mac or Linux machine, RBS don't want your business.

Virgin Direct

www.virgin-direct.co.uk ★★★

If you can handle the concept of keeping all your money and all your debts in one account, then Virgin Direct's online banking is for you. This is the Net interface for the much-talked-about Virgin One account, and it gets full marks for originality with its groovy Game Boy-style browser. Check out the funky Flash demo to see if it's up your street.

best money sites ★★★★★

where can I...

31.08.2000
Register
moneyUnlimited
Home News Advice bank My portfolio Search Help
Data Special reports Find a... Calculators Saved stories Terms of use
Home insurance
Do you have enough cover?
Isa deadline
Check out the tax rules
Financial update from MoneyWorld
Last updated at 10:53 on 31 March 2000.
Prices are 15 minutes in delay.
Up to 50%

Sensible financial advice and news from the Guardian – moneyunlimited.co.uk

LEARN ABOUT INVESTING?

www.mrscohen.com
Bernice Cohen on investing.
www.fool.co.uk
Advice for the learner investor.
www.armchairmillionaire.com
Guide to making a million.

GET FINANCIAL ANALYSIS?

www.invweek.co.uk
From *Investment Week*.
www.eye4money.com
UK and US financial information – plus a share simulation game.
www.hemscott.com
Get access to a veritable mine of analysis.

GET MONEY NEWS AND SHARE PRICES?

www.ft.com
This is the mother of all money sites.
www.bloomberg.co.uk
The latest, up-to-date data for professionals.
www.sharepages.com
Rapidly updated prices, and news from all markets.

TRADE SHARES?

www.stocktrade.co.uk
Dealers in UK stocks.
www.barclays-stockbrokers.co.uk
Site offering real-time dealing and advice.
www.forex-cmc.co.uk
First online foreign-exchange dealer.

SORT OUT MY FINANCES?

www.thisismoney.com
Online personal finance adviser, there to help you with your cash problems.
www.iii.co.uk
Advice for individual investors and help with finance.
www.moneyunlimited.co.uk
Financial advice, portfolio building and a resource guide from *The Guardian*.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

uk.finance
Discussion, chat and advice on a whole variety of topics, including banks.

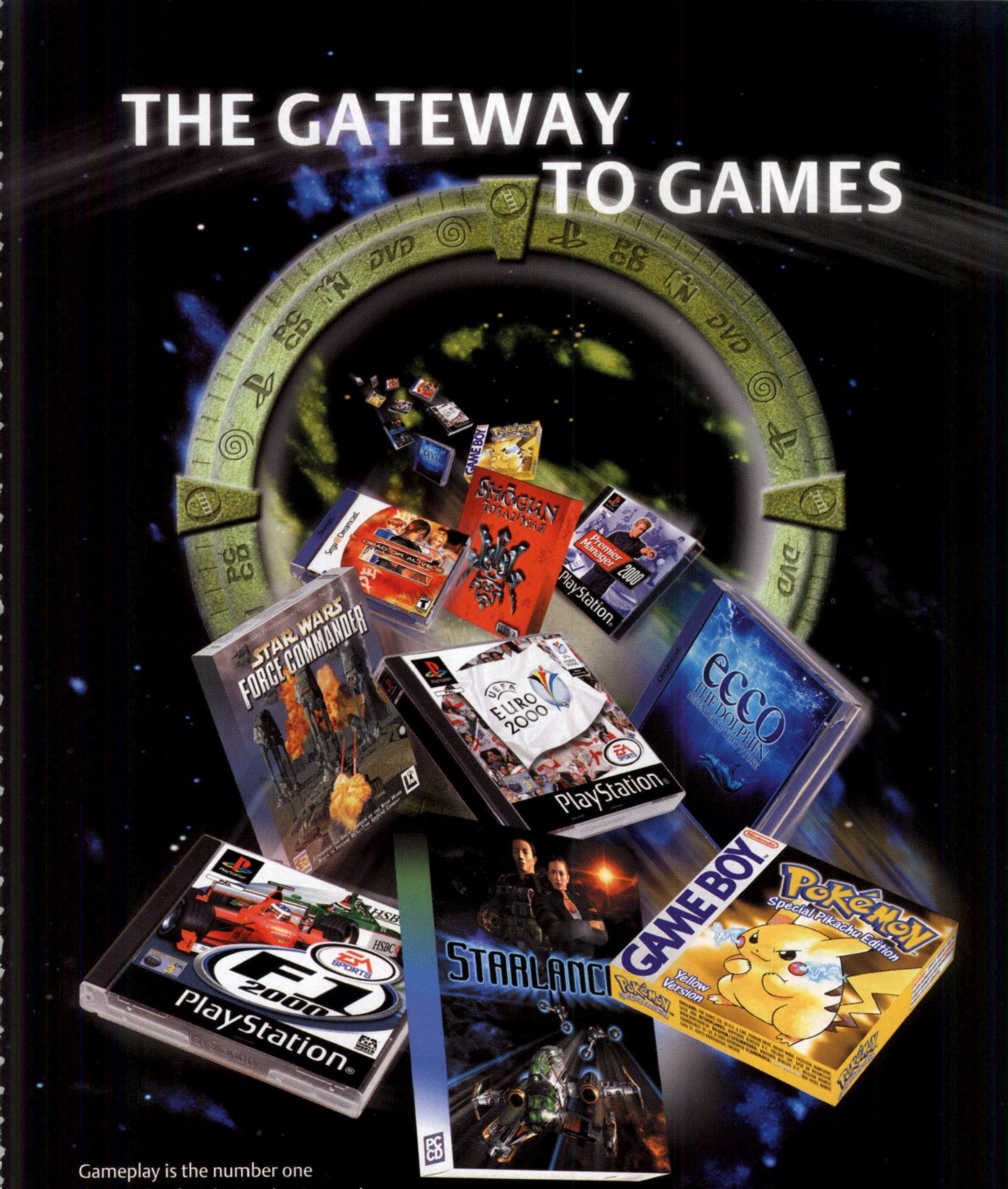
GET CHATTING?

investor.msn.com
Join in the fun that is Microsoft money and chat with other finance fans.

Sir Norman's latest tower earned another huge advance

WORDS: CHRIS HADLEY; PICTURES: KOBAL, MOVIESTORE

THE GATEWAY TO GAMES

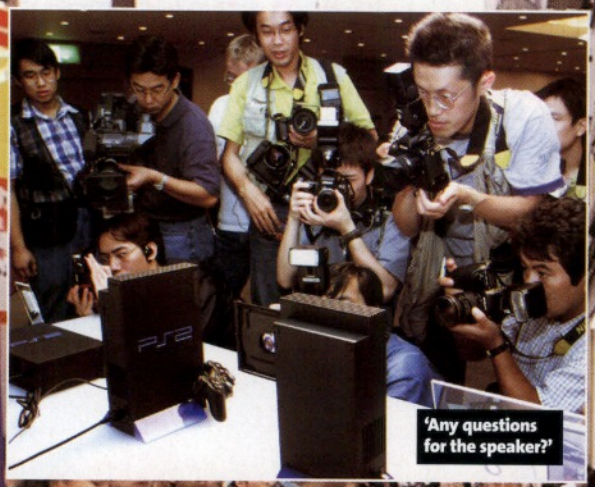


Gameplay is the number one destination for playing, buying and chatting about games. Our award-winning website features over 3000 games, consoles, accessories, guides and more. All at great prices and all including FREE delivery. You'll also find the largest FREE online gaming network in Europe. Enter the gateway to games at www.gameplay.com.

www.gameplay.com

gameplay

THE GATEWAY TO GAMES



'I'm cutting me own throat, guv'

BUYING GAMES Don't put up with High Street prices – use the Web to find yourself the cheapest games

Chips World

www.chipsworld.co.uk ★★★★

The console is king in Chips World. PlayStation, N64, Dreamcast and GameBoy are all well served with a wide range of titles at reasonable prices. There's a comprehensive list of up-coming releases to order from, but the real bargains are to be had on the second-hand titles. As an added bonus Chips offers free delivery to mainland UK.

Entertainment Express

www.entexpress.com ★★★

Once you get past the DVDs, videos, CDs and concert tickets that are hawked here, there's a great selection of games...honest. But, although there are loads of special offers, the biggest new titles are often available cheaper elsewhere. However, it claims 90 per cent of the items advertised are in stock, unlike some other sites – and offers free delivery worldwide.

Game

www.game-retail.co.uk ★★★★

Game hits the Net with a great looking site. The high street retailer stocks a vast selection of competitively priced titles, including the CD-ROM of Ultima – Ascension for £27.99. Added incentives to visit include emails on new releases, a branch locater and links to downloadable demos of PC games.

Gameplay

www.gameplay.com ★★★★★

Buy your games from the same place you play them; you know it makes sense. Gameplay, the virtual shop, also owns Wireplay, the free online gaming service. So after your £19.99 copy of Quake 3 Arena arrives, you can return to the same place to go head-to-head or join the Gameplay Community.

Chips: not a motorbike in sight

Games Paradise

www.gamesparadise.com ★★★

Games Paradise is a division of WH Smith, and using it feels just like shopping in the High Street – it's a trusted, family brand that charges a little bit more. Still, the back catalogue is good if you know what you're looking for, and there's that known-quantity feel for online shopping virgins.

Shop4Games

shop4games.co.uk ★★★

There are hundreds of games across all platforms for sale here, and at reasonable prices, too. The

best games sites ★★★★★

where can I...

PLAY GAMES ONLINE?

www.shockwave.com
Shocked games and cartoons.
www.gameplay.com
Britain's biggest and best online gaming site.
www.gameszone.com
Free service covering all of Europe.
www.theclq.com/main.asp
The Champions League of Quake.

FIND DEMOS?

www.happypuppy.com
The newest demos and shareware games.
www.gameaddict.net
Demos and reviews for PC games.
www.3dfiles.com
Demos and shareware downloads of the latest and best games.
www.acdownload.com
Plenty of great downloads.

FIND HINTS AND CHEATS?

www.gamefaqs.com
An encyclopedia of advice for games.
www.xcheater.com
The latest cheats for new games.
www.cheatstation.com
Cheats and ever-so-helpful hints.
totalgames.net
Hints and tips plus news and views.

FIND GAMING NEWS?

www.gamesdomain.co.uk
News and game-related features.
www.gamedaily.com
All the latest news on this busy site.
www.ign.com
Thorough worldwide games news.
www.bluesnews.com
In-depth articles and features.

PLAY TRADITIONAL GAMES?

games.yahoo.com
Card games, board games and more.
www.bignetwork.com
A collection of classic gaming tournaments.
www.pogo.com
Site with both traditional and arcade games.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.games.video.sega-dreamcast
If you've got a Dreamcast, then take a seat and chat here.

GET CHATTING?

www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Arcade/6469/chat.html
A well-maintained Quake chat room.

shockwave.com
no need to change your phone line
GAMES CARTOONS MUSIC GREETINGS & CREATIVITY SEARCH
CLICK TO SEE THE NEW shockwave.com
CLICK HERE
your GUIDE for Tuesday, Apr. 4
7th PORTAL
STAN LEE'S NEW HEROIC ADVENTURE SERIES

Moving pictures and thrilling animations at Internet supersite shockwave.com

Games Street: savings galore

Games Street

www.gamesstreet.infront.co.uk ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Part of the Streets Online group, which also sells DVDs, CDs and books, Games Street offers amazing deals on a wide range of games. Register for the Informers mailing list for release dates of big titles, and then pre-order to save large wads of cash – pre-ordering Star Wars: Force Commander would have seen the price drop by £16. A powerful search engine locates the games, and gives detailed information when you find what you want. Plus, it also offers free delivery and a loyalty bonus scheme for regular customers.

only drawback is that they're listed in something of a muddle and the search engine throws up some very odd results. The directory of patches for PC games is useful, but why don't developers just finish them first before the release date?

Simply Games

www.simplygames.co.uk
★★★★★

No-nonsense shop offering great prices on PC and console titles. It had the cheapest prices on many titles, including Dreamcast's Virtua Striker 2 for £29.99, with free delivery. Result.

Software First

www.softwarefirst.co.uk ★★★★

There's a membership system here: cough up a £6 joining fee and you get cheaper games. But you benefit: prices become very competitive. It also has order tracking so you know when to look for postie.

URwired

www.urwired.com ★★★★

Fast, effective and simple: that's how we like our shopping sites, and URwired fits the bill. Prices aren't bad, and are helped by free UK delivery. You can also read reviews of most titles before you flash the plastic, and there's plenty of cheats for those of you without the nous to work them out for yourself.

PONG LIVES ON

SOMETHING SMELLS FUNNY

A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away, there was a game called Pong. Developed by Atari – who older readers will remember once ruled the video games world – and sadly based on tennis, Pong looks almost Victorian today. The first Pong machine was in a bar called Andy Capp's in Sunnyvale, California, and it started a revolution. A revolution that's still going on today, in the form of the PlayStation 2, Nintendo Dolphin and Microsoft X-box – and that's without the constant developments with the PC games market. Those of you with a sense of history can check out *newton.physics.arizona.edu/~hart/vgh/* for a history of computer games, although you're probably too busy playing the latest technology to care about where it all started.

Pong: missing a certain 'ping'

WORDS: SHAUN MARIN ; PICTURES: CORBIS

GADGET GIVEAWAY!

Thousands of pounds worth of fantastic gear must be won

COMPETITION

WITH THE WORLD'S factories disgorging an endless stream of high-tech wizardry, keeping up with the latest hardware has become a full-time occupation. But rest assured: state-of-the-art gadgetry can be yours – thanks to **thenet** and 21store.com, the home of digital wonders on the Web. We've got a Psion 7, Casio digital cameras, Casio ProTrek GPS watches and Cpen text scanners up for grabs – all you have to do to win one is email us the answer to this simple question:

What's the name of 21store.com's resident advisor on GPS systems?

A John McDonald
B Jim MacAccurate
C John MacAccurate

Casio QV-3000EX digital Camera

Casio ProTrek GPS watch

Cpen 200 text scanner

Psion 7 Series

21store.com
0845 844 2121
We know digital
Home page
Membership
Search Site
HELP!
Studios 4-7, Building 56
Magnet Road, East Lane
Wembley, MIDDX HA9 7RG
Switchboard: +44 (0) 20 8385 4800
Fax: +44 (0) 20 8385 4828
Customer Services: +44 (0) 20 8385 4848
Product Quick Search
Go
USA & Canada
For your palmtop...
Palmtop PCs & PDAs
Global Positioning Systems (GPS)
Mobile Data & Telephones
SoftGSM
Digital Cameras & Video
Binoculars & Night Vision
Digital Audio
Sports Watches
Calculators & Organisers
Digital Camera & Palmtop Memory
Accessories & Extras
Select a product family...
Apple (iMac)
go
Ericsson MC218 Personal Digital Assistant
The Ericsson Mobile Companion MC 218 has all the features of our best selling Psion PDA with the added value of a free slip case, a DI-27 InfraRed Modem and WAP-functionality.
Details
£297.03 EX VAT
£349.00 INC VAT
Buy Now!
Panasonic DECT Cordless Phone CD955 with Caller ID
Top quality DECT (Digital Enhanced Cordless Telephone) with caller ID
Details
£80.85 EX VAT
£95.00 INC VAT
Buy Now!
Diamond Rio PMP500 Portable MP3 Player
Rio 500 is a portable digital audio player that stores up to two hours of digital-quality music and more than 32 hours of spoken audio programs. Access thousands of music and audio files at RioPort.com or over 16,000 hours of Audible.com audio programs. Instantly create, customize and mix your favorite music and audio selections on your PC or Mac for playback on Rio. Rio is the perfect companion for active people – delivering skip-free music and audio for people on the go.
Details
£169.36 EX VAT
Buy Now!
RED HOT BESTSELLERS
Psion Revo
The switched on organizer for busy people who need to stay in touch, wherever they are!
£220.43 EX VAT
£259.00 INC VAT
Buy Now!
Garmin eTrex GPS Receiver
Compact and easy to use

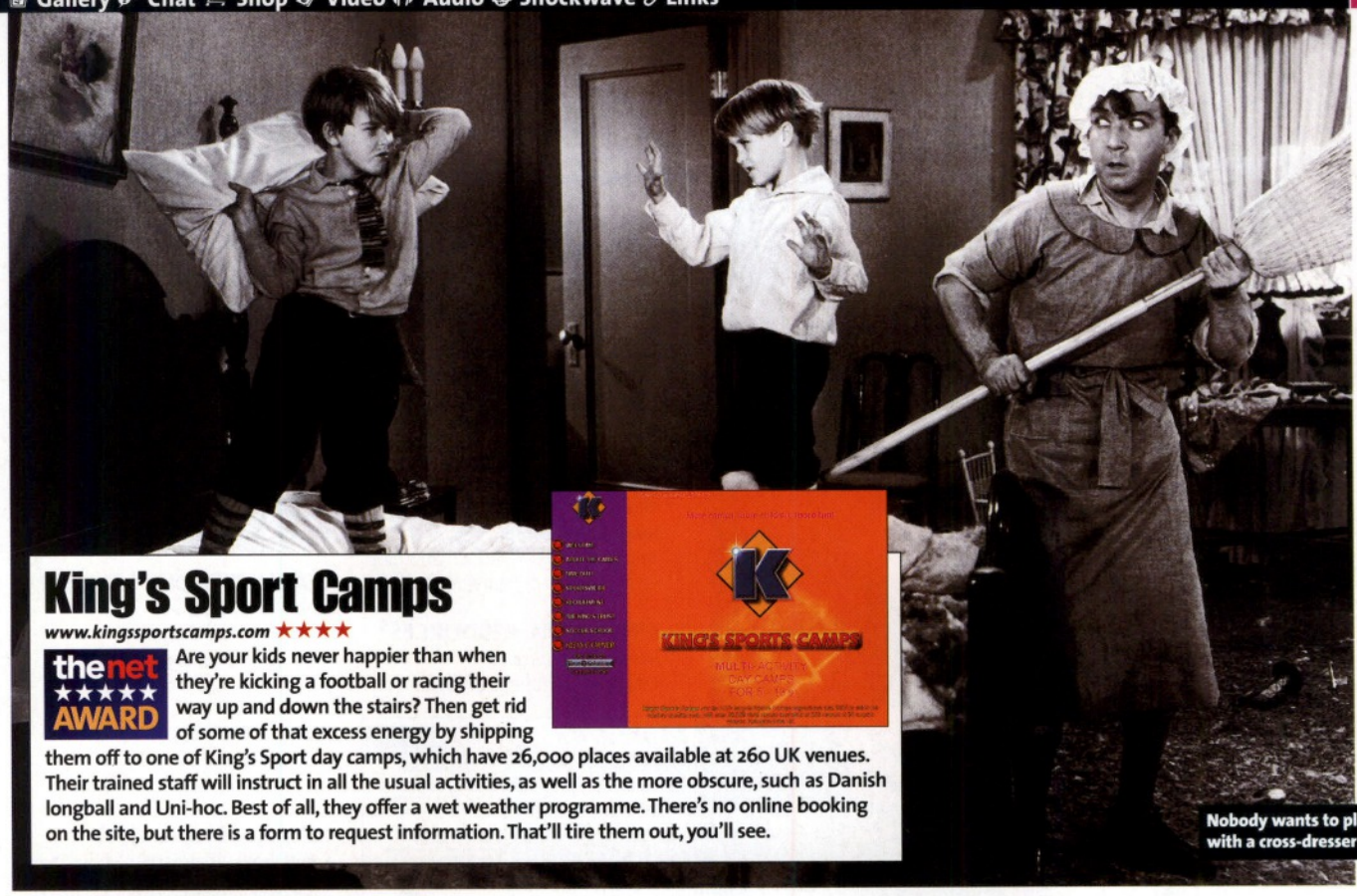
TO ENTER visit our Web site, ***www.thenetnow.co.uk***, follow the link to 21store.com and find the answer. Then fill in the form on our site and e-mail it back to us... and before you know it, postie could be knocking on your door with a shining piece of 21st century kit under his arm.

The first correct e-mail out of the hat will win a Psion 7, worth £645. The next two will receive Casio QV-3000EX digital cameras, worth £549 each; the following three each receive a Casio ProTrek GPS watch, worth £299 apiece; while four more lucky readers win £169 Cpen 200 text scanners.

21store.com
We know digital
www.21store.com

Terms & Conditions

Closing date for entries is 21st June 2000. Entrants must be resident in the UK. The ten prizewinners will be chosen from all the correct entries received by 22nd June 2000. All prizewinners will be notified within 48 hours of the draw by e-mail to the address submitted with the entry form on ***www.thenetnow.co.uk***. Employees and their relatives of 21store.com and the net are not eligible to enter. No cash alternatives or substitute prizes will be allowed. The competition organisers reserve the right to supply a prize of similar value and specification if the named prize is unavailable. The decision of the organisers is final and no further correspondence will be entered into. Information on the winners will be available within four weeks of the published closing date and will be supplied on receipt of a stamped, addressed envelope.



Nobody wants to play with a cross-dresser

King's Sport Camps

www.kingssportscamps.com ★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Are your kids never happier than when they're kicking a football or racing their way up and down the stairs? Then get rid of some of that excess energy by shipping them off to one of King's Sport day camps, which have 26,000 places available at 260 UK venues. Their trained staff will instruct in all the usual activities, as well as the more obscure, such as Danish longball and Uni-hoc. Best of all, they offer a wet weather programme. There's no online booking on the site, but there is a form to request information. That'll tire them out, you'll see.

best kids sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND KIDS' TV SITES?

www.citv.co.uk
The fun begins here with all your childrens' TV favourites, from *Dog and Duck* to *The Wombles*.
www.bbc.co.uk/education/home
Will guide you towards all BBC kids' TV raves, plus Schools Online.

Pick up some goodies for kids at funstore.co.uk

BUY TOYS ONLINE?

www.toysrus.co.uk
Offers easy shopping access to all the big brand-name toys.
www.funstore.co.uk
A real house of fun for those in search of toys.
www.etoys.co.uk
Well-organised online toy shop with handy 'favourite toy' finder.

FIND IDEAS FOR DAYS OUT?

www.bbc.co.uk/ukok
The BBC does it again with this guide to fun for the holidays.
www.virgin.net/daysout
Masses of ideas for those great British days out; you can search by area or activity.

FIND BEDTIME STORIES?

www.home-office-mall.com/bedtime-story
Stories you can print out.
www.bedtimebooks.com
These claim to teach children 'an important message'. Yuck.

FIND WEB SITES FOR TEENAGERS?

www.teen-scene.com
Everything for the wired teenager.
www.teen-net.com
Innovative teen portal, with music, sport and forums.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

rec.travel.europe
Get some handy ideas for child-friendly summer breaks.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Find your child a penpal by mailing ***listproc@mainstream.net*** with 'subscribe penpals' in the body of the message.

GET CHATTING?

members.tripod.com/teen_BEAT/friends_chatroom
Chat with other teens on all the essential topics.

Looking for more kids' sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 116

WORDS: SARAH WAKELY; PICTURES: KOBAL, MOVIESTORE

'...and don't ever come back'

SUMMER HOLIDAYS They're just round the corner... can the Web keep youngsters amused for the hols?

Camp Beaumont

www.campbeaumont.com ★★★★

If you like the idea of offloading your kids at camp but would actually quite like them back at the end of the day, Camp Beaumont offers day-long as well as residential camps. Holidays can be booked online and there's a bulletin board where you can chat about your little darlings with fellow parents or staff.

Leonardo soon lost his figure

Childminders

www.babysitter.co.uk ★★★

You've tried your best but they still aren't happy – so give it up as a lost cause and dump them on someone else. Childminders will help you find a qualified and interviewed local babysitter. Too good to be true? Well, unless you live in London or the Thames Valley, it is.

Families.co.uk

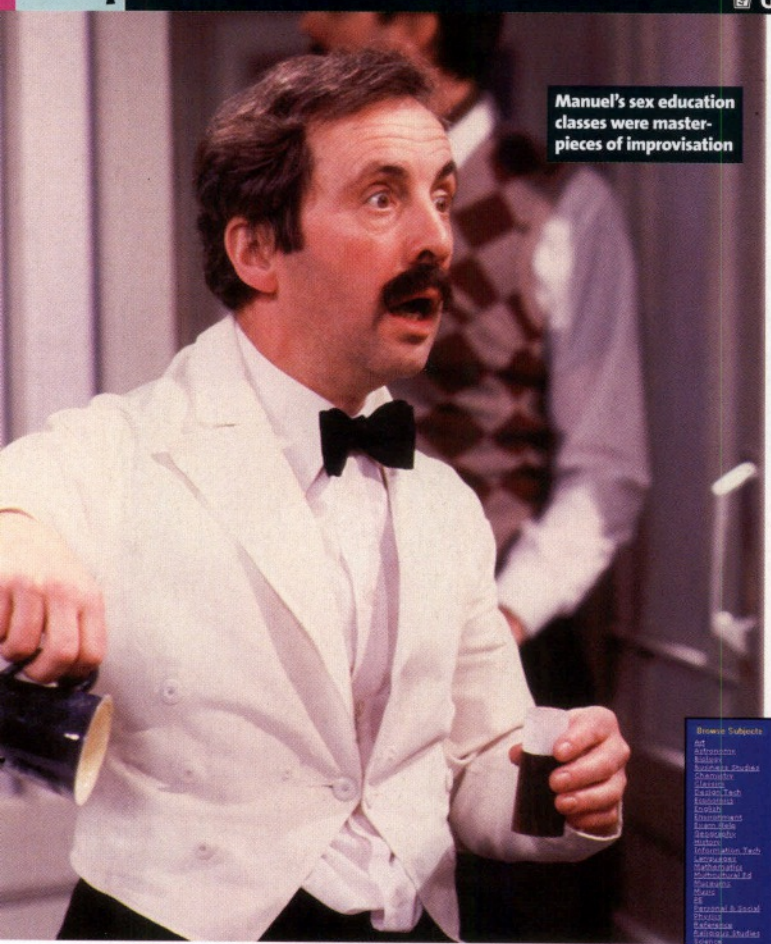
www.families.co.uk ★★★

Children still aren't welcome in a lot of pubs, which can make a family day out less than exciting for those of us who've reached legal drinking age. So be sure to take a look at families.co.uk before you take them out, to find out which places welcome both you and your kids. A superb idea, well-executed.

The Idea Box

www.theideabox.com ★★★★

'I'm bored.' Not any more, sonny. Idea Box's suggestions range from the traditional (the words to *Itsy Bitsy Spider*) to the bizarre ('Dryer Lint Modelling Material') to the seasonal ('Basic Pancakes for Father's Day). Also included is a suggested phrase to tell a child for the day – usually more encouraging than 'I SAID NO!'.


Manuel's sex education classes were masterpieces of improvisation

best learning sites ★★★★★

where can I...

LEARN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE?
www.travlang.com
70 languages to learn online.
www.learnplus.com
Spanish and German tuition.
www.ipl.org/youth/hello
Learn 30 languages free.

LEARN A USEFUL SKILL?
www.how2.com
How to do almost anything.
www.learnfree.com
Learn how to do (almost) anything with the help of RealVideo tutorials.

FIND EXAM RESOURCES?
www.topmarks.co.uk
Help with hundreds of topics.
www.kevinsplayroom.co.uk
Boasts links for every school subject going.
www.bjpinchbeck.com
The famous homework helper.

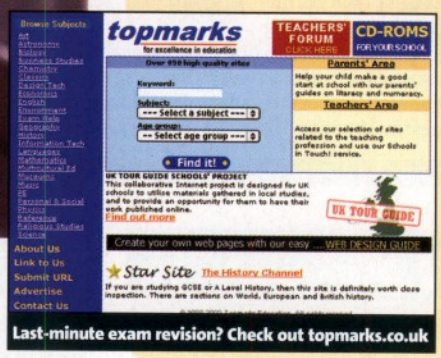
LEARN AN INSTRUMENT?
www.pianoworld.com
Tickle those ivories like a pro.
www.cyberfret.com
The 'online college of guitar wisdom'.
www.v-zone.com/tpo/Trumpet.html
Blow your own trumpet on the Net.

LEARN WITHOUT SCHOOL?
www-icdl.open.ac.uk
The good old OU online.
www.tele-school.org
Learn online and interact, too.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?
sci.lang.translation
For proper translation fans only.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?
Send a message marked 'subscribe esl-sne' followed by your full name- to ***listproc@schoolnet.ca*** to learn English as a second language.

GET CHATTING?
www.writelinks.com
A community of troubled scribes.

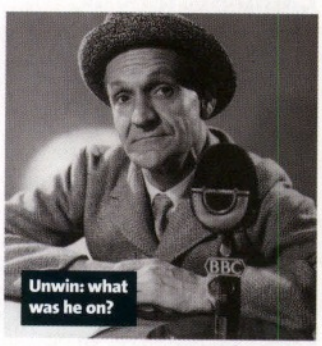


Last-minute exam revision? Check out topmarks.co.uk

Pulp those phrasebooks

TRANSLATORS They claim to turn foreign-speak into English, but do they deliver? Web translators tested

Babelfish
babelfish.altavista.com ★★★★
Who can resist a service named after the translating fish found in *The Hitchhikers Guide To The Galaxy*? Just type or paste in your text, tell the fish which of the ten available language pairs you want to translate from (for instance, from French to English), and wait a few seconds for the consistently excellent result to appear.
Result of translation (see right): *The feet of a man should be planted in his country, but its eyes should look at the world.*


Unwin: what was he on?

Softissimo
www.softissimo.com ★★★
As with most of the sites reviewed here, the object is to entice you into buying offline software or translation services – and Softissimo certainly offers a broad range of award-winning products, with downloadable demos. Half a dozen core European languages can be translated free online, and although the test results were disappointing, it's still a worthy bookmark.

Freetranslation.com
www.freetranslation.com ★★★★★
thenet ★★★★★ AWARD
In terms of translation ability, this site ties with the more famous Babelfish, but wins on one key area. Accents – those funny little symbols that sit atop some letters – make a big difference to the quality of a machine-rendered translation, and this site allows you to insert them. We tested each site with the following phrase, turning it from French back to English: 'A man's feet should be planted in his country, but his eyes should survey the world.' Here's how Freetranslation fared: *The feet of a man should be planted in his country, but its eyes should look at the world.*

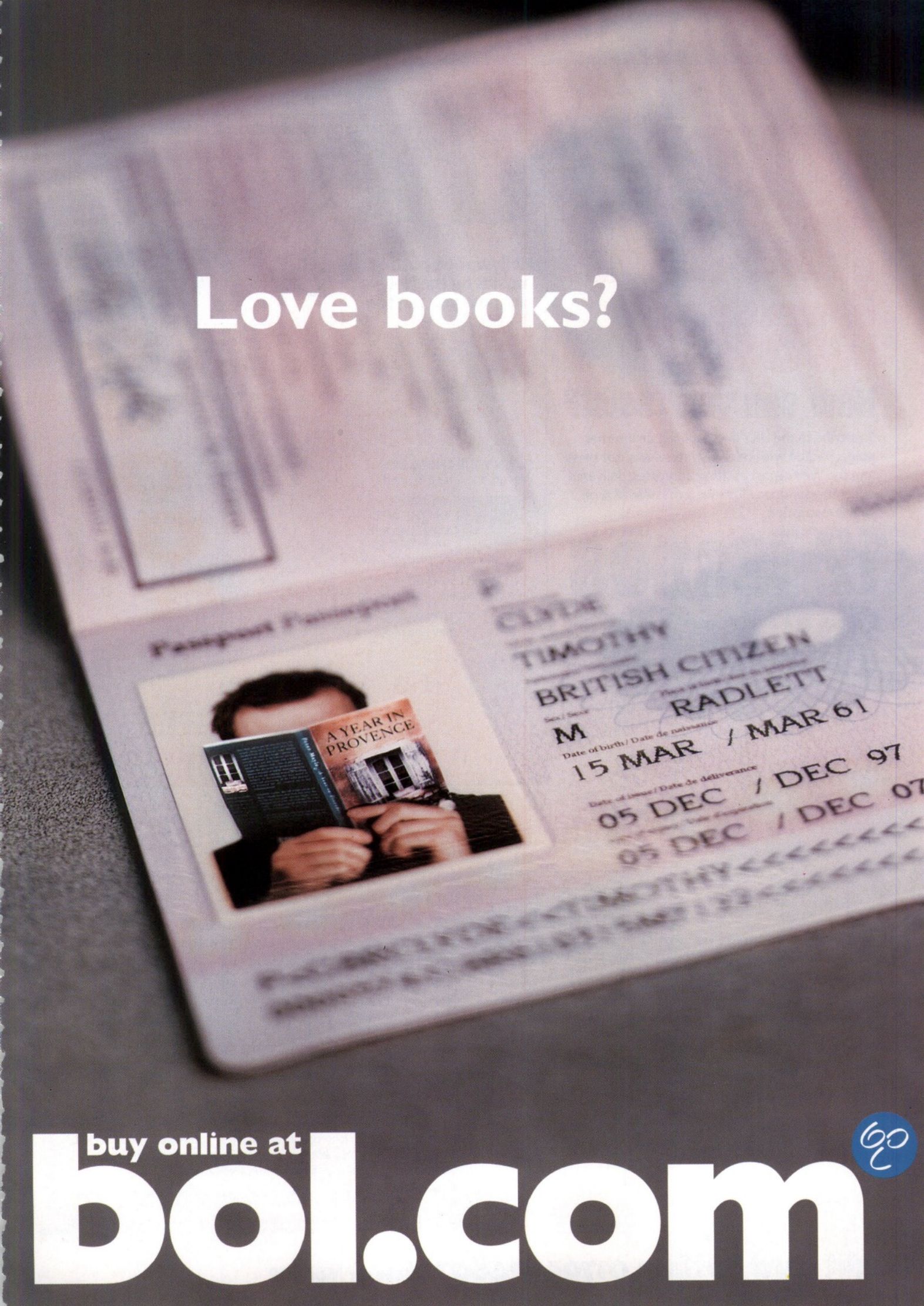
Result: *The feet of a man should be planted in the country, but the eyes should look at world.*

T-Mail
www.t-mail.com ★★★
An unassuming site with a novel method of translation: send an e-mail in English to yourself and cc the message to T-Mail, defining in the address field the relevant language pair. It works well – though with a response time of several hours, everything from a machine to an infinite number of monkeys might be behind the translation. However, this service should excel with Net-enabled mobile phones.
Result: *A man's feet should be planted in his/her/its country, but his/her/its eyes should look at the world.*

'Greetings from the Belgian jury'

Translation Experts Limited
www.tranexp.com ★★
Quality not quantity is an apt maxim for this site. Although it offers a staggering number of language pairs (767, so it claims, that should allow you to translate, let's say, Icelandic to Japanese) the results – on the evidence of our simple test – are very likely to come out as Dutch.
Result: *The feet [d'un] bloke shall have to be seedling at her country, but her eyes shall have to look him earth.*

WORDS: JOHN GOSLING; PICTURES: PA, EMPICS, REX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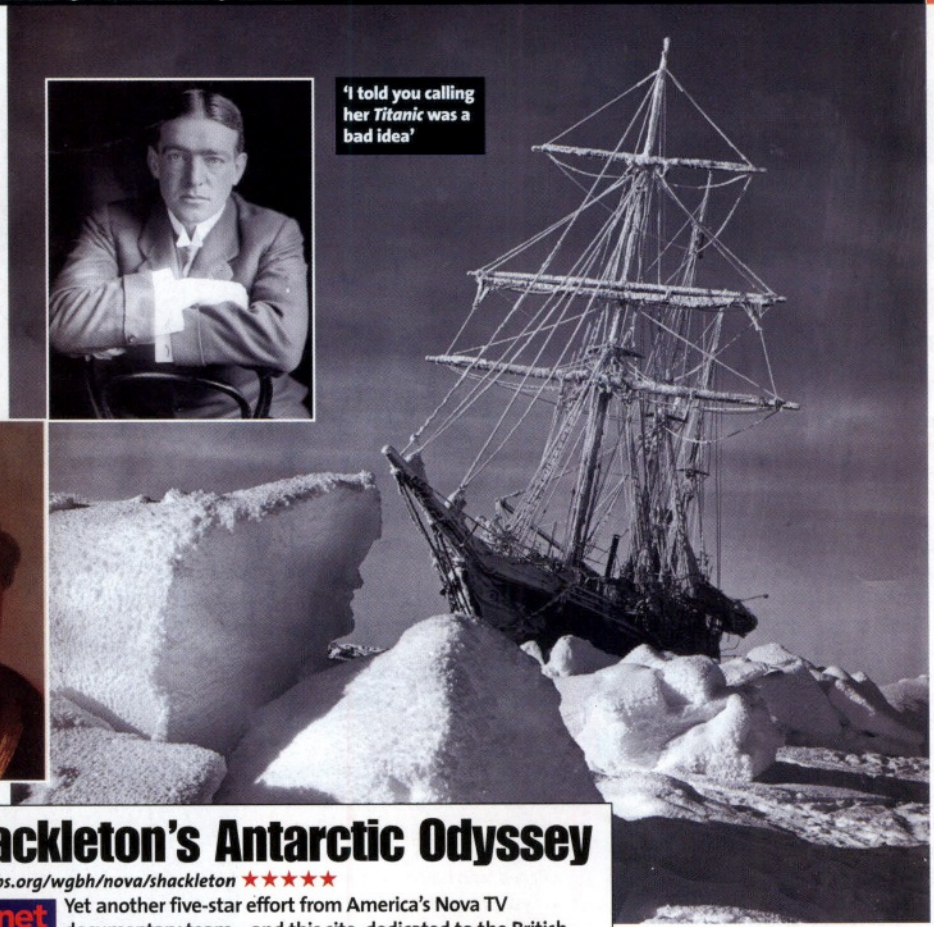
Internet explorers

EXPLORERS Not the browser, but the geographical pioneers

'I told you calling her *Titanic* was a bad idea'

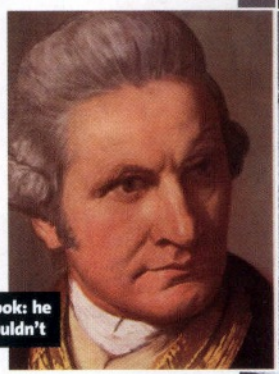


Captain James Cook, The World's Explorer

members.tripod.com/~cuculus/cook.html

★★★

In his three great voyages before 1780, Cook saw more of the world than any man alive. This useful site, based on a lengthy biography, is full of nuggets: for example, his ships' crews were made to eat sauerkraut to prevent scurvy. Great stuff.



Cook: he couldn't

Christopher Columbus – A Culinary History

www.castellobanfi.com/features/story_1.html ★★★

You can almost taste the weevils while reading this essay, hidden away on an Italian foodie site. There are no fancy graphics; just wonderful words on 15th century cuisine and seafarers' dietary problems, in the course of which you discover the true nature of Columbus: duplicitous and vain, apparently.

Shackleton's Antarctic Odyssey

www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/shackleton ★★★★★

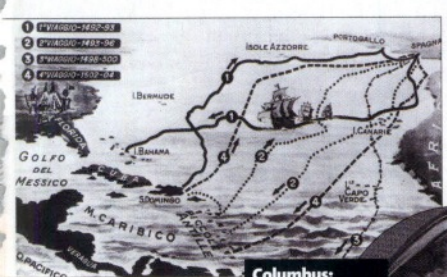
thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Yet another five-star effort from America's Nova TV documentary team – and this site, dedicated to the British explorer's 1914 expedition, is a beauty. Shackleton intended to cross Antarctica, but his ship was caught and crushed in pack ice. The subsequent story is an epic of endurance, navigation (800 miles in an open lifeboat) and husky cookery, with stiff upper lips to the fore. There's even a note of black comedy: after setting sail on the opening day of WWI, Shackleton's first words to a South Georgia whaler 22 months later were: 'Who won?' Of course, the war still had two bloody years left to run.

Sir Richard Francis Burton

asa.bc.ca/ home/rowena/srfb.html ★★

Not the Welsh luvvie, but the Victorian explorer who discovered the source of the Nile, posed as a Muslim pilgrim to visit Mecca and first translated *Arabian Nights* and the *Kama Sutra*. This site is a gathering place for fans, with much interactive fun to be had.



Columbus: looked like a girl

Discovering Lewis And Clark

www.lewis-clark.org

★★★★

In 1804, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark set off on a two-year exploration of the Missouri and Colorado rivers. Their map-making opened up the American West, while their journals recorded landscapes and tribes destined to vanish. Find out more here: an ongoing project packed with info. One thing they didn't take was a dictionary – Clark managed 27 different spellings of the word 'Sioux'.

best history sites ★★★★★ where can I...

RESEARCH BRITISH HISTORY?

www.thehistorychannel.co.uk

Resource guide and forum for British history.

www.great-britain.co.uk/history/history.htm

Just like a gigantic textbook online; concise, but lots of fun.

VISIT AN ONLINE MUSEUM?

www.nhm.ac.uk

The Natural History Museum site, with masses of information.

www.museums.co.uk

Handy Web directory of all the online museums.

RESEARCH THE MONARCHY?

www.royal.gov.uk

The official site, where Her Maj will answer your queries.

www.dcs.hull.ac.uk/public/genealogy/royal

Where to find out about the Royal Family's genealogy – you might even find you're related.

History Now – thehistorychannel.co.uk

FIND OUT ABOUT WWII?

britaininworldwar2.future.easyspace.com

Well-written, informative nuggets on the 1939-45 conflict.

www.geocities.com/Pentagon/4143

The Battle of Britain well and truly explored.

INVESTIGATE MY FAMILY HISTORY?

www.familysearch.com

Births, marriages and deaths.

www.pro.gov.uk

Public Records Office advice.

BUY A BIT OF HISTORY?

www.collectiques.co.uk

Huge directory of online antiques.

www.theantiquesdirectory.co.uk

Where and how to buy old stuff.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

soc.history.what-if

What if America hadn't been discovered? There's a thought. Discuss it here.

GET CHATTING?

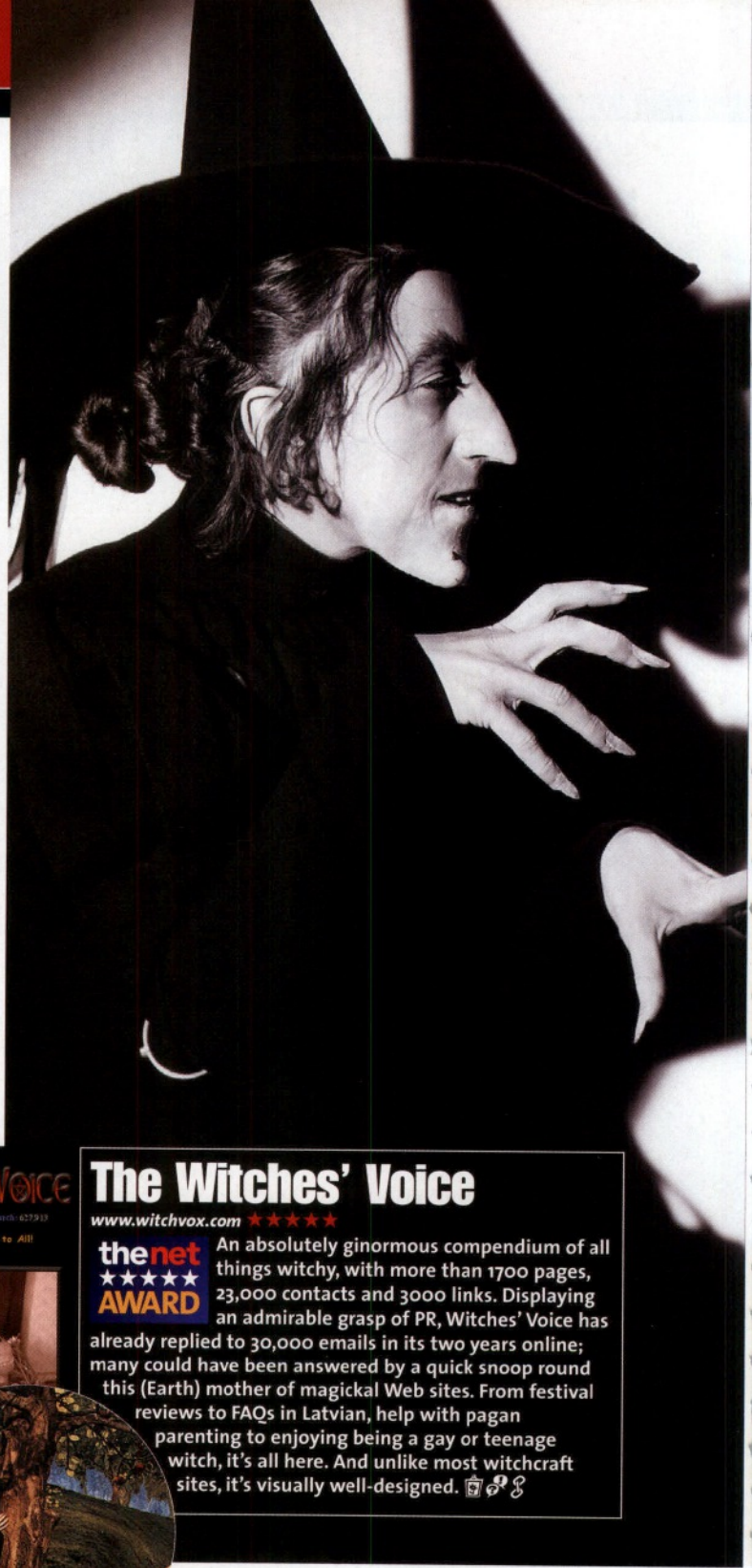
chat.genealogy.org

Family research in a chat room. Useful if you have no leads and need some advice.

WORDS: MATTHEW BINGHAM; PICTURES: HULTON GETTY

Hubble bubble, toil and trouble

WITCHES Thought broomsticks and black cats were mere fiction? You clearly haven't seen the Internet



The Craft

www.mindspring.com/%7Eselenem ★★★★

Absolutely nothing to do with the film of the same name (except for being about witches). An attractively illustrated homepage can sometimes lead to less well-presented supplementary sections, but you can't fault the amount of information here – as proven by the number of awards the site has won from fellow fans of Wicca. There's even a contacts page if you want to meet like-minded individuals...

Few had seen Cher without her make-up

Culminus Rite

members.aol.com/SoulPirate ★★★

A hideously ugly site with a background pattern that has a tendency to misload as something even uglier. However, if you want pictures, got to an art gallery; you're here for the magick words, after all. On the site you'll find detailed 'How-To' sections (cribbed from a medieval spellbook written by a French alchemist in the Caribbean) on séances, prophecy and – tastily – retribution. Nice.

Elderflower's Wicca Page

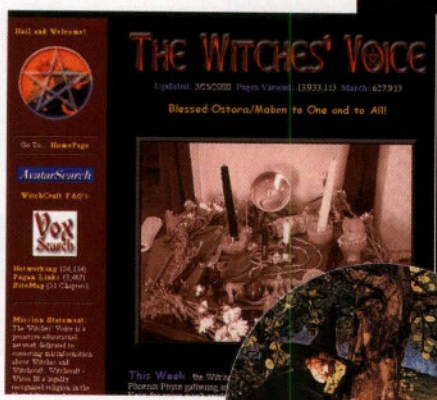
student.uq.edu.au/~s350209/wicca ★★★

The public face of witchcraft, Wicca is a 'fertility, earth-based and nature oriented' religion followed by many a witch. Although it's pagan (ie it's not Judeo-Christian), there's something awfully familiar about phrasing such as: 'Before time was, there was The One; The One was all, and all was The One.' Irritatingly over-used font aside, it's a decent read.

A Library of the Magickal

www.geocities.com/SoHo/7786/magick.htm ★★★★

The whole nine yards: from spells to Tarot via herbs, auras and astral projection. The site owner says her fascination with magic began with *Bewitched*, and has culminated in this mystic miscellany. The site can give conflicting advice, although 'if you absolutely must find out if a lemon is ruled by masculine or feminine forces... allow your heart to tell you what is true.' You can't say fairer than that.



The Witches' Voice

www.witchvox.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

An absolutely ginormous compendium of all things witchy, with more than 1700 pages, 23,000 contacts and 3000 links. Displaying an admirable grasp of PR, Witches' Voice has already replied to 30,000 emails in its two years online; many could have been answered by a quick snoop round this (Earth) mother of magickal Web sites. From festival reviews to FAQs in Latvian, help with pagan parenting to enjoying being a gay or teenage witch, it's all here. And unlike most witchcraft sites, it's visually well-designed.

Witches: hunched

Necro-nomicon Research Group

www.ping.de/sites/systemcoder/necro/necro.htm ★★★

Composed by a mad poet said to have been 'seized by an invisible monster in broad daylight and devoured horribly', the Necro-nomicon is the (un)holy scripture of witchcraft, feverishly hunted by followers like the NRG. Spells are, erm, spelled out; however, *the net* takes no responsibility for the effects of things like the bodacious-sounding 'Most Excellent Charm Against the Hordes of Demons'.

Online Curses

onlinecurses.com ★★★

Comical site which allows you to email hexes to friends or enemies. Choose your curse – besides trusty favourites like bad luck, you can induce contemporary afflictions like alien abduction and stock market loss. A one-joke site, but a good 'un.

Salem@national geographic.com

www.nationalgeographic.com/features/97/salem ★★★★

In 1692, Salem, Massachusetts became the site of a famous witch-hunt. *National Geographic* covers the story in typically attractive

WORDS: GARY PARKINSON; PICTURES: KOBAL, MOVIESTORE

'And this one's a rabbit...'

best weird sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND WEIRD NEWS?

www.anorak.co.uk
The weirdest stuff from Brit tabloids.
www.joeha.com/whiteboard
A collection of those silly little stories to email your mates.
www.tabloid.net
National Enquirer-style paper, which mixes truth and fiction.
members.aol.com/JACO70/wackynewz1.index.html
Absolutely everything and anything strange.

Come over all paranoid with a visit to disinfo.com

FIND THE REAL X-FILES?

www.seti-inst.edu
The world's top ET-hunters try to track down little green men.
www.ufomag.co.uk
Home of *UFO Magazine*, with plenty of thought-provoking debate.
foia.fbi.gov/unusual.htm
Over 1600 pages of previously secret material from the FBI.
www.foia.ucia.gov
More grainy, indistinct documents from the US Government's vaults.

LEARN ABOUT CULTS?

cti.itc.virginia.edu/~jkh8x/soc257/home.html
The maddest cults in the world, lovingly detailed for your perusal.
www.mayhem.net/crime/cults.html
Find out what happens when dangerous cults go over the edge.
www.factnet.org
Regular newsletter dedicated to tracking scary sects worldwide.
www.religioustolerance.org/destruct.htm
Get the lowdown on potentially dangerous cults before you join.

FIND OUT ABOUT AREA 51?

www.ufomind.com/area51
A hefty resource on the secret base.
www.nauticom.net/users/ata/area51.html
Excellent site. Includes travel tips.
www.parascope.com/articles/1196/area1.htm
Find a photograph of the infamous black mailbox here.

FIND A CONSPIRACY THEORY?

www.disinfo.com
Conspiracies for the whole family.
www.4conspiracytheories.com
A wealth of conspiratorial links.
www.conspire.com
Sceptical tales with tongue placed firmly in cheek.
www.larouchepub.com
Very, very worrying indeed.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.witchcraft
Swap spells and tips with fellow witches.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

For witchcraft tips for beginners, send an email with 'subscribe craft101' in the body to
Majordomo@MyList.net

GET CHATTING?

www.scibernet.com/xfiles
Drop in for regular chats with those who know the truth is out there.

'It didn't turn out like this on *Delia*...'

fashion: navigating a series of pop-up windows, you play the part of an accused 'witch' on trial. Though fictional, the story links to several factual pages, and there's also a chat room, postcard-sending facility and Q&A. Spookily fun.

The Vodou Page

members.aol.com/racine125 ★★★
Often phonetically spelt as voodoo, vodou is followed by thousands in the Caribbean and West Africa. Here, a priestess whose name translates as the bizarre 'Roots Without End, Who Was Already There, of Guinea' explains several aspects of the tradition, from the basics of initiation through to vodou's role in Haitian politics. Make of it what you will.

Witch's Brew

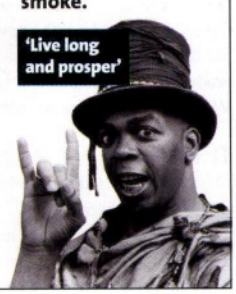
www.witchs-brew.com/wbrew.html
★★★
Besides the naughty broomstick-riding variety, you also come across pleasant 'white' witches. If kindly Aunty Annie dabbled in sorcery, she'd be this sort. Webmistress Lady Morgan is there 'for all of mother's children', sprinkling spells from her Book of Shadows. Don't think you'll be turned into a frog here...

Debbie would do anything to feed Daniels' fantasies

STICK A PIN IN IT

VOODOO CHILE

Harbour a hankering to stick pins in dolls? Get on the www and surf to VVV – Very Virtual Voodoo (*www.to.or. at/vvv*). An online spell-caster, VVV *could* help you get the revenge, lover or wad of cash you're after. Choose your intensity with the spell checker (geddit?) and name your doll – careful you don't get thine enemies mixed with your lover. Download a drumloop, either .au or .wav, then 'smoke a cigarette or stuff (you don't have to inhale)' and cast your spell. Before your eyes the doll crumples. Or maybe it's just the smoke.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Wine Spectator
www.winespectator.com

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PlayStation ***www.playstation.com***
Sega ***www.sega-europe.com***
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Department of Health
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Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions
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Open.gov.uk ***www.open.gov.uk***
Scottish Parliament
www.scotland.gov.uk
Welsh Assembly ***www.wales.gov.uk***

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China ***www.gov.cn***
European Commission ***europa.eu.int***
France ***www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr***
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Intelihealth ***www.intelihealth.com***
Mayo Clinic ***www.mayo.edu***
MedRef ***www.medscout.com***
Mental Health
www.mentalhealth.com
Patient ***www.patient.co.uk***

SUPPORT & INFORMATION

Alcoholics Anonymous
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org
Alzheimer's Disease Society
www.alzheimers.org.uk
Cancer Bacup
www.cancerbacup.org.uk
Centre For Online Addiction
netaddiction.com
Diabetes UK ***www.diabetic.org.uk***
Don't Smoke
www.dontsmoke.com
Fitness Online
www.fitnessonline.com
HIV/AIDS Information & Links
www.brad.ac.uk/staff/ijhodgson/hivlinks.htm
National Meningitis Trust
www.meningitis-trust.org.uk
WeightWatchers
uk.weightwatchers.com

PICTURES: EMPICS, HULTON GETTY, IMAGEBANK, MOVIESTORE, RETNA

TRAVEL Book your hols online and, if it's your birthday, you might be able to sit next to the captain

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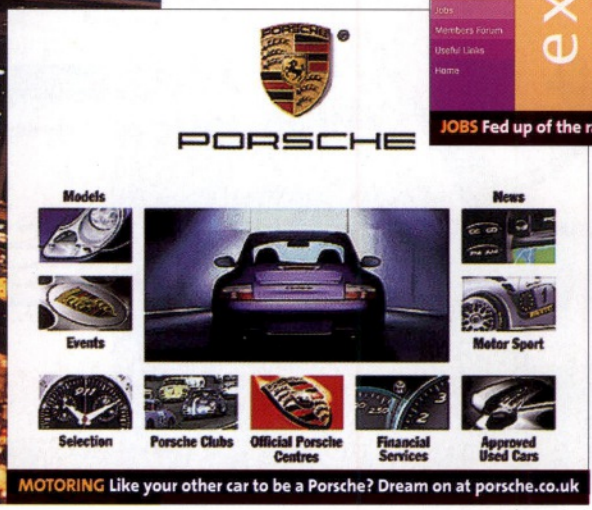

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Cluttons Daniel Smith ***www.cluttons.com***
Foxtons ***www.foxtons.co.uk***
Friend & Falcke ***www.friendandfalcke.co.uk***
Goldschmidt Howland ***www.goldschmidt-howland.co.uk***
Hamptons ***www.hamptons.co.uk***
John D. Wood ***www.johndwood.co.uk***
Knight Frank ***www.knightfrank.co.uk***
Strutt & Parker ***www.struttandparker.co.uk***
Winkworth ***www.winkworth.co.uk***
Your Move ***www.your-move.co.uk***

PROPERTY FINDERS

Accommodation Directory ***www.accommodation.com***
Bamboo Avenue ***www.bambooavenue.com***
Easier.co.uk ***www.easier.co.uk***
HomeDirectory ***www.homedirectory.com***
Homefile UK ***www.homefileuk.co.uk***
Home Free Home ***www.homefreehome.co.uk***
Homepages ***www.homepages.co.uk***
Home to Home ***www.home-to-home.co.uk***
Home Sale ***www.home-sale.co.uk***
HouseNet ***www.housenet.co.uk***
Internet Property Finder ***www.propertyfinder.co.uk***
Lets Direct ***www.letsdirect.co.uk***
Pavilions of Splendour ***www.heritage.co.uk***
Property Sight ***www.property-sight.co.uk***
UK Property Gold ***www.ukpg.co.uk***

HUMOUR

Comedy Zone ***www.comedy-zone.net***
Cyber Comedian ***webtamers.com/comedian.html***
Funplanet ***www.funplanet.co.uk***
Funny ***www.funny.co.uk***
JokeDepot ***www.jokedepot.com***
JokePost ***www.jokepost.com***
Jongleurs ***www.jongleurs.com***
The Onion ***www.theonion.com***
South Park ***www.comedycentral.com***
TV Go Home ***www.tvgohome.com***
Uproar ***www.uproar.com***
Whatever ***www.whatever.uk.com***

JOBS

EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

Brook Street ***www.brookstreet.co.uk***
Independent Appointments ***www.indappts.co.uk***
Manpower ***www.manpower.co.uk***
Reed ***www.reed.co.uk***

JOB SEARCHES

Expat Network ***www.expatnetwork.co.uk***
Gradunet ***www.gradunet.co.uk***
Guardian ***www.jobsunlimited.co.uk***
Jobsearch UK ***www.jobsearch.co.uk***
Jobsin ***www.jobsin.co.uk***
Jobsite ***www.jobsite.co.uk***
MonsterBoard ***www.monster.co.uk***
Overseas Jobs ***www.overseasjobs.com***
Personnelnet ***www.personnelnet.com***
Stepstone ***www.stepstone.co.uk***
Temp Jobs ***www.tempjobs.co.uk***
Total Jobs ***www.totaljobs.com***
Yelcom ***www.yelcom.com***
Wide Eyes ***www.wideyes.com***

KIDS

0-8

Bedtime stories ***www.home-office-mall.com/bedtime-story***
Cartoon Network ***www.cartoonnetwork.co.uk***
Disney Channel ***www.disneychannel.co.uk***
FunSchool ***www.funschool.com***
Kidscom ***www.kidscom.com/orakc/Mousers/mouse.html***
Nickelodeon ***www.nickjr.com***
Sesame Street ***www.sesamestreet.com/preschool***

8 PLUS

AJ Kids ***www.ajkids.com***
BBC Schools Online ***www.bbc.co.uk/education/schools***
Club-Z ***www.club-z.com***
EduWeb ***www.eduweb.co.uk***
Family Education ***www.familyeducation.com***
BJ Pinchbeck Homework Helper ***www.bjpinchbeck.com***
Tarzan ***disney.go.com/worldsofdisney/tarzan***
Teen Advice ***www.teenadvice.net***
Thunk ***www.thunk.com***
Yahooligans ***www.yahooligans.com***

LAW

Desktop Lawyer ***www.desktoplawyer.freeserve.net***
Divorce Online ***www.divorce-online.co.uk***
Law Rights ***www.lawright.co.uk***
Legaldocs ***www.legaldocs.com***
UK Law Online ***www.leeds.ac.uk/law/hamlyn***

MAGAZINES

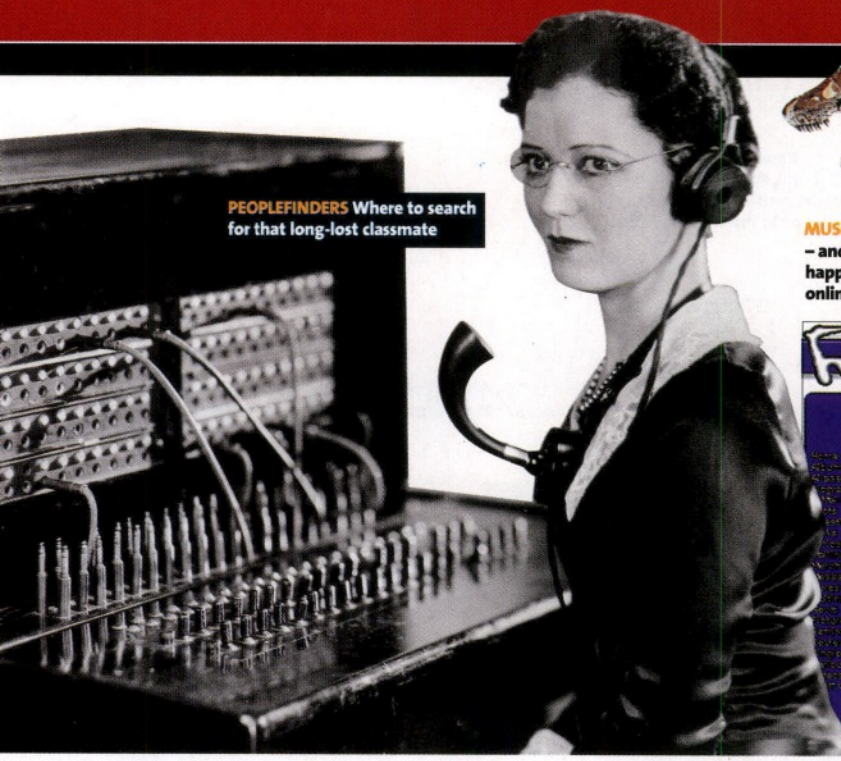
ONLINE MAGS

Dredly ***www.dredly.com***
Foocha ***www.foocha.com***
Garbled Communications UK ***www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Show/1322***
Salon ***www.salon.com***
Seven ***www.sevenmag.com***
Slate ***www.slate.com***
Suck ***www.suck.com***
Teeth ***www.teethmag.com***
Word ***www.word.com***

MOTORING

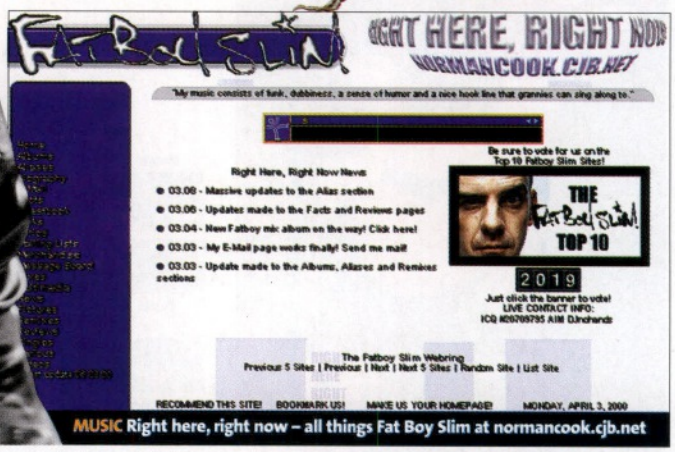
CAR MANUFACTURERS

Audi ***www.audi.co.uk***
BMW ***www.bmw.co.uk***
Citroen ***www.citroen.co.uk***
Ferrari ***www.ferrari.it***



PEOPLEFINDERS Where to search for that long-lost classmate

MUSEUMS He queued – and looked what happened to him. Visit online at nhm.ac.uk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www.mercedes-benz.co.uk
Nissan ***www.nissan-europe.com***
Peugeot ***www.peugeot.co.uk***
Porsche ***www.porsche.co.uk***
Rover ***www.rover.co.uk***
Toyota ***www.toyota.co.uk***
Vauxhall ***www.vauxhall.co.uk***
Volkswagen ***www.volkswagen.co.uk***
Volvo ***www.volvocars.volvo.co.uk***

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Imperial War Museum
www.iwm.org.uk
National Gallery
www.nationalgallery.org.uk
Natural History Museum
www.nhm.ac.uk
Tate Gallery ***www.tate.org.uk***

MUSIC

BRITISH MP3 PORTALS

Brand New Music
www.brandnewmusic.com
Crunch ***www.crunch.co.uk***
Get Out There
www.getoutthere.bt.com
Getsigned.com ***www.get-signed.com***
Music Unsigned
www.musicunsigned.com
Peoplesound ***www.peoplesound.com***
Vitaminic ***www.vitaminic.co.uk***

TOP ARTISTS

The Beatles ***members.tripod.com/~taz4158/pepper.html***
Blur ***www.blur.co.uk***
David Bowie ***www.davidbowie.com***
Boyzone ***www.boyzone.co.uk***
Catatonia ***www.catatonia.com***
Fatboy Slim
www.normancook.cjb.net
Macy Gray ***www.macygray.com***
Jamiroquai ***www.jamiroquai.co.uk***
Manic Street Preachers
www.manics.co.uk
Oasis ***www.oasisinet.com***
Prince ***www.love4oneanother.com***
Radiohead ***www.radiohead.co.uk***
REM ***www.remhq.com***
Spice Girls
superspice.hypermart.net
Stereophonics
www.stereophonics.co.uk
Supergrass ***www.supergrass.com***
Travis ***www.travisonline.com***
Robbie Williams
www.robbiewilliams.co.uk

NEWS

NEWSPAPERS

Electronic Telegraph
www.telegraph.co.uk
Guardian Unlimited
www.guardianunlimited.co.uk
Independent
www.independent.co.uk
MegaStar ***www.megastar.co.uk***
The Mirror ***www.mirror.co.uk***
The Sun ***www.the-sun.com***
The Times ***www.the-times.co.uk***

NEWS SERVICES

BBC ***news.bbc.co.uk***
CNN ***www.cnn.com***
ITN ***www.itn.co.uk***
NewsNow ***www.newsnow.co.uk***
News Unlimited
www.newsunlimited.co.uk
PA News ***www.pa.press.net***
Reuters ***www.reuters.com/news***

PEOPLE FINDERS

EMAIL ADDRESSES

Bigfoot ***bigfoot.com***
EmailFinder
www.emailfinder.com
People Site ***www.peoplesite.com***
WhoWhere ***www.whowhere.com***
Yahoo ***people.yahoo.com***

PHONE NUMBERS

BT Directory Enquiries
www.bt.co.uk/phonenetuk
Thomson Directories
www.thomweb.co.uk
Yellow Pages ***www.yell.co.uk***

RADIO

STATION DIRECTORIES

Broadcast ***www.broadcast.com/radio***
On The Air ***www.ontheair.com***
Radio Directory
www.radiodirectory.com
Radio Now
www.radionow.co.uk
Radio On The Internet
www.radio-on-the-internet.com
RealGuide ***realguide.real.com***

SCIENCE

NEWS AND UPDATES

BBC Science ***news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/sci/tech/default.htm***
Eureka Alert ***www.eurekalert.org***
NASA ***science.nasa.gov***
New Scientist ***www.newscientist.com***
WhyFiles ***whyfiles.news.wisc.edu***

SEARCH ENGINES

Altavista ***www.altavista.digital.com***
Ask Jeeves ***www.askjeeves.com***
Dogpile ***www.dogpile.com***
Electric Library ***www.elibrary.com***
FAST ***alltheweb.com***
Google ***www.google.com***
HotBot ***www.hotbot.com***
Lycos ***www.lycos.com***
MetaCrawler
www.metacrawler.com
Mirago ***www.mirago.co.uk***
Northern Light ***www.nlsearch.com***
Pandia Search Central
www.pandia.com

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Auction Universe
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eBid ***www.ebid.co.uk***
eSwap ***www.eswap.co.uk***
Eurobid ***www.eurobid.com***
Last Minute ***www.lastminute.com***
QXL ***www.qxl.com***
What Am I Bid?
www.whatamibid.com

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Centreshop ***www.centreshop.com***
eDirectory ***www.edirectory.co.uk***
Enterprise City
www.enterprisecity.co.uk
IMRG ***shops.imrg.org***
Internet Shopping
www.internetshopping.com
ShopGuide ***www.shopguide.co.uk***
Shoppers Universe
shoppersuniverse.com
Shopping UK
www.internetics.co.uk/shop
ShopSmart ***www.shopsmart.com***
Shops On The Net ***www.sotn.com***
Shop Spy ***www.shopspy.co.uk***
ShopYell ***www.shopyell.co.uk***
Taxi ***www.mytaxi.co.uk***
Virtual Mall ***www.thevirtualmall.co.uk***
UK Max ***www.ukmax.co.uk/shopping***
UK Shopping Zone
ukshoppingzone.co.uk

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Arsenal ***www.arsenal.co.uk***
Aston Villa ***www.astonvilla-fc.co.uk***
Bradford City
www.bradfordcityfc.co.uk
Chelsea ***www.chelseafc.co.uk***
Coventry City ***www.ccfc.co.uk***
Derby County ***www.dcfc.co.uk***
Everton ***www.evertonfc.com***
Leeds United ***www.lufc.co.uk***
Leicester City ***www.lcfc.co.uk***
Liverpool ***www.liverpoolfc.net***
Manchester United
www.manutd.com
Middlesbrough ***www.mfc.co.uk***
Newcastle United ***www.nufc.co.uk***
Sheffield Wednesday ***www.swfc.co.uk***
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www.sunderland-afc.com
Tottenham Hotspur
www.spurs.co.uk

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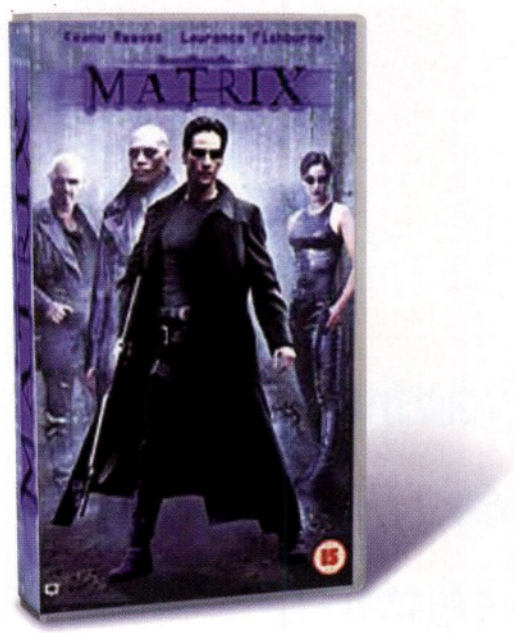

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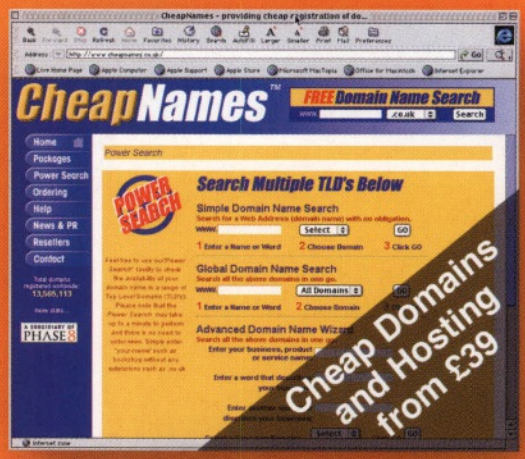
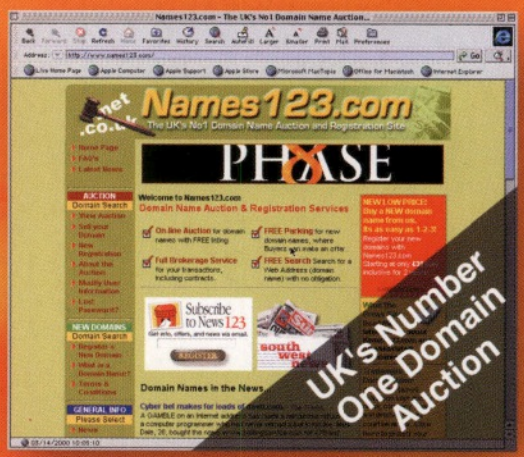


www.cheapnames.co.uk



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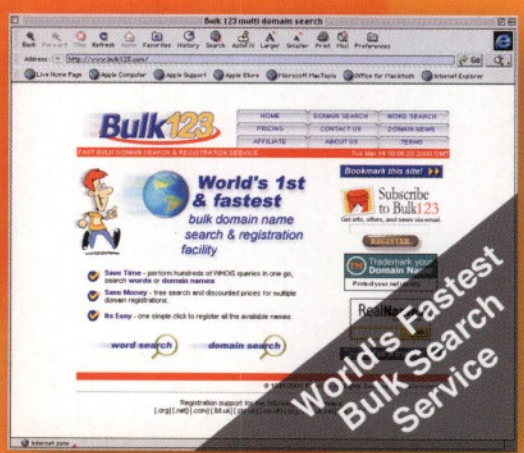

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www.martial-arts-network.com
Motorsport ***www.autosport.com***
Racing ***www.racingpost.co.uk***
Rugby League ***www.rleague.com***
Rugby Union ***www.scrum.com***
Skiing ***www.complete-skier.com***
Snooker ***www.snookernet.com***
Tennis ***www.itftennis.com***

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MAIN SITES

BeautyLink ***www.beautylink.com***
Boo.com ***www.boo.com***
Cosmopolitan ***www.cosmomag.com***
Elle ***www.ellemag.com***
Fashion And Beauty Internet Association ***www.fbia.com***
Fashionfile ***www.fashionfile.co.uk***
Fashion Mall ***www.fashionmall.com***
FashionNet ***www.fashion.net***
Models.com ***www.models.com***
Salonweb ***www.salonweb.com***
Style Experts ***www.stylexperts.com***
Vogue ***www.vogue.com***

TELEVISION

TOP SHOWS

Big Breakfast
bigbreakfast.channel4.com
Brookside ***www.brookie.com***
Coronation Street
www.coronationstreet.co.uk
EastEnders
www.bbc.co.uk/eastenders
Friends ***friends.warnerbros.com***
Hollyoaks ***www.hollyoaks.com***
Neighbours ***www.neighbours.com***
Jerry Springer ***www.universalstudios.com/tv/jerryspringer***
X-Files ***www.thex-files.com***

TV COMPANIES

BBC ***www.bbc.co.uk***
Channel Four ***www.channel4.co.uk***
Channel Five ***www.channel5.co.uk***
ITV ***www.itv.co.uk***
Sky ***www.sky.co.uk***

TRAVEL

AIRLINES

Air Canada ***www.aircanada.ca***
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American Airlines ***www.aa.com***
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BA ***www.british-airways.com***
BM ***www.iflybritishmidland.com***
Buzz ***www.buzzaway.com***
Continental ***www.flycontinental.com***
Easy Jet ***www.easyjet.com***
Go ***www.go-fly.com***
Iberia ***www.iberia.com***
KLM ***www.klmuk.com***
Lufthansa ***www.lufthansa.com***
Qantas ***www.qantas.com.au***
United Airlines ***www.ual.com***
Virgin Air ***www.virgin-atlantic.com***

DESTINATION GUIDES

Australia ***australia-online.com***
Caribbean
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France ***www.franceway.com***
Germany ***www.germany-tourism.de***
Greece ***www.areianet.gr/infoxenios***
India ***www.indiagov.org***
Ireland ***www.irelandseye.com***
Italy ***www.travel.it***
Japan ***www.jnto.go.jp***
Lonely Planet ***www.lonelyplanet.com***
Portugal ***www.portugal-web.com***
Ski Club Of Great Britain
www.skiclub.co.uk
Spain ***www.spaintour.com***
UK ***www.visitbritain.com***
US ***www.go-unitedstates.com***

FERRIES

Ferry Savers ***www.ferrysavers.co.uk***
P&O ***www.poef.com/poef/index.htm***
Travel Britain
www.travelbritain.com/UKPassengerFerries.html
Travel.World
www.travel.world.co.uk/ferries.htm

RAIL TRAVEL

Euro Railways
www.eurorailways.com
Great Eastern Railway
www.ger.co.uk
Great Western Trains
www.great-western-trains.co.uk
Railtrack ***www.railtrack.co.uk***
Scotrail ***www.scotrail.co.uk***
Trainline ***www.thetrainline.com***
UK Public Transport Information
www.pti.org.uk
Virgin Trains ***www.virgintrains.co.uk***

TRAVEL AGENTS

A2B ***www.a2btravel.com***
Airtickets ***www.airtickets.co.uk***
Bargain Holidays
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Biztravel ***www.biztravel.com***
Campus Travel
www.usitcampus.co.uk
Cheap Flights
www.cheapflights.co.uk
Deckchair
www.deckchair.com
ebookers ***www.ebookers.com***
Expedia ***www.expedia.co.uk***
Holiday Wizard ***www.holidaywizard.co.uk***
Internet Travel Services
www.itsnet.co.uk
Last Minute
www.lastminute.com
STA Travel
www.statravel.co.uk
Thomas Cook
www.thomascook.co.uk
Thomson
www.thomson-holidays.com
Trailfinders ***www.trailfinder.com***
Travelocity ***www.travelocity.com***

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DIRECTORIES

Allcam ***www.allcam.com***
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Digital Camera Network
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Earthcam
www.earthcam.com
Webcam Central
www.camcentral.com
WebCam World
www.webcamworld.com
Webviews ***www.webviews.co.uk***

FAVOURITES

AfriCam ***www.africam.com***
The Dolls' House
www.bravo.co.uk/dolls
Howletts Zoo ***www.howletts.net***
Interactive Model Railroad
rr-vs.informatik.uni-ulm.de
Jennicam ***www.jennicam.org***
Radio 1
www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/inside_r1
Ultimate Taxi
www.ultimatetaxi.com
WalfordCam ***www.bbc.co.uk/eastenders/walfordcam***

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Cybersnoop ***www.pearlsw.com***
Cyber Patrol ***www.cyberpatrol.com***
Net Nanny ***www.netnanny.com***
Xcheck ***www.xcheck.net***

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About.com ***www.about.com***
4anything ***www.4anything.com***
AOL Netfind
www.aol.com/netfind
Excite ***www.excite.com***
Infoseek ***infoseek.go.com***
Liszt (mailing lists) ***www.liszt.com***
LookSmart
www.looksmart.com
Open Directory ***www.dmoz.org***
UK Plus ***www.ukplus.co.uk***
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You can treat Freeserve as your home on the Web. Every time you log on to *www.freeserve.com* you'll find yourself on the Today channel page, with the very latest in news, sport, weather and features at your fingertips.

When you've got yourself up to speed with the latest, check out our channels on the left-hand side. From there, you'll find everything you need. Whether you're a newshound or a weather-watcher, a sport buff or a soap fan, it's all on our choice of chunky channels designed to bring you the best content on the Web.

Perhaps you'd like to sample the thrill of an online auction; if so, turn to page iv for a look at FSauctions. Or maybe you're worried about exams: turn to Learning for revision help. If business is your bag, try the Business Centre, and if you've got itchy feet, try the Travel channel. And there's the best shopping experience on the Net at SHOP@freeserve.

So what's the point in leaving *www.freeserve.com*?

'The best content on the Internet is all under one roof, on the Freeserve Today page'

YOUR SITE

Make yourself at home

The beauty of the Net is that anyone can get on there and have their say. At Freeserve we believe that's your right, and we'll do our best to help you achieve it by giving you room on the Web to build your own website. Building a website may sound tough, but the latest software – available free on the Freeserve sign-up CD – makes it a cakewalk by doing all the technical stuff for you.

That's not all. When you join up with Freeserve you get a whopping 15Mb chunk of cyberspace for your site, held on Freeserve's computers so you don't clog up your machine. You'll soon be on the Net!

WAP happy

What's this WAP that everyone's talking about? It's the Internet on your phone, and we'll tell you all about it on

page xiv

SPEECHMAIL

Freedom from the modem with email by phone

On the move but want to check your email? Miles from a PC but need to check for a vital message? Now you can with a new initiative from Freeserve – called Speechmail.

The idea behind Speechmail is that you can access your email messages over the phone without even needing a computer. And as usual, there's absolutely no charge for Freeserve customers.

Simply sign up to the service at the URL below, and you'll be given a phone number which you can use to access your mail. You can ring it from any phone, including your mobile. It all means that you don't need your modem to check your mail!

When you ring up, you can either use spoken commands or press the keypad to access your messages. So you need never lose track of your emails or go uninformed again!

www.freeserve.com/speechmail

CHANNEL GUIDE

Some of the great channels available on Freeserve

Today

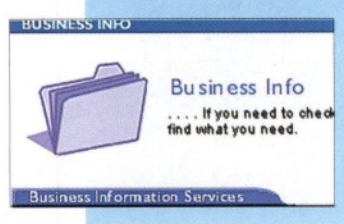
Freeserve has always strived to provide the best content on the Web, with new information and entertainment every month. The end result of this is the new front page at *www.freeserve.com*, which has recently been redesigned to make navigation around the site much easier. The new homepage has been styled as the Today channel, with an exciting mix of topical content and features to enjoy. Go there today!

Auctions

The thrill of bidding for items at bargain prices is no longer confined to auction rooms. By going to FSauctions at *www.fsauctions.co.uk*, you can peruse the wide variety of merchandise on offer and place your bid. It's up to you to decide how high to go! See over the page for more on FSauctions.

Business

Do you run a small business, online or off? If so, you could benefit from the Freeserve Business channel. From conference calls to calling cards, you'll find that the Business channel is your one-stop shop for all your needs.



Careers

You're wired, now get hired – not fired. The Careers channel lets you search databases of 70,000 jobs nationwide; you can even apply online, or submit your CV and wait for employers in your area to come to you!

Image Bank

Who'll start me at £1...?

powered by freeserve
www.freeserve.com

Modem-based bargain-hunters have never had it so good as FSauctions goes mad in May with offers starting at a quid.

Sip champagne aboard supersonic Concorde, slip behind the wheel of your new Ford Puma, slip on a Manchester United Champions League shirt signed by all the players from last year's historic final. FSauctions, the Freeserve online auction site, is celebrating its rising popularity by offering an unbeatable range of items for auction during May.

Each week you will have the chance to bid on items with an opening bid starting at just £1 and with absolutely no reserve! Visit the site at *www.fsauctions.co.uk* to find out what's on offer each week. How about a new Dreamcast console, dinner for four in a submarine or the latest WAP mobile phone? These, and several others, are all up for grabs on the site, starting at just £1.

Bidding is easy and fun. Visit the site and you're sure to find something you want to buy. Complete the simple registration process and make your bid; if someone outbids you, try again with a better offer. The other bidder might not be prepared to go as high as you, but then again they might go higher. You'll find out soon enough, as there's a deadline for bids. It's all great fun.

You could win a Ferrari for the weekend, a new mountain bike or an MP3 player. Again, all the bidding for all these items will start at just £1, and with no reserve price, they are guaranteed to sell to the highest bidder.

Freeserve 'auctioneer' Simon Danciger is particularly excited about the Concorde tickets on offer.

'You would normally have to pay around £800 for a supersonic day trip on this amazing aircraft. Every day throughout May we will be offering seats on which the bidding starts at just £1. This is an unbelievable opportunity to experience the marvel of supersonic travel.'

Whether you're after a bargain, a last-minute treat or a collectible item, you'll find them all under one roof. This month, you're likely to find they start at just £1...
www.fsauctions.co.uk

ELSEWHERE ON FSAUCTIONS

It's not all Ferraris, Concorde and submarines on FSauctions. In addition to all the wonderful offers on these pages, you can pick up everyday goods at knockdown prices simply by keeping an eye on the bids at *www.fsauctions.co.uk*. There's always a bargain to be found, and if you need something new it's often worth a quick peep to see what's on FSauctions.

CHANNEL GUIDE

Some of the great channels available on Freeserve

Chat

Freeserve's ever-popular chat service is a great hit. You can use our new 3D chat rooms to get around and explore virtual reality worlds, or even set up your own chatgroups – see page x for more details.

Entertainment

The latest releases in the worlds of film and music are all here on the newly expanded Freeserve Entertainment channel. From Stravinsky to the Stereophonics and Tarantino to Toy Story 2, it's all in Entertainment.

Learning

From pre-school right through to A-level, Freeserve Education is there to help you through your studies with an interactive learning environment to encourage learning skills.

Life

New from Freeserve, the Life channel is an exclusive features magazine which brings you the latest lowdown on everything that matters, on-line and off. Whatever you're into, you'll enjoy Life.

Money

Freeserve will help you keep your finances healthy with expert advice. Whether you want savings tips or advice on choosing an ISA, you can keep your pocket full with Freeserve.

How to bid... and win

Everyone loves a bargain. More and more people are discovering that the easiest way of spotting a deal is through online auctions. So how do you do it?

The trouble with traditional auctions is that you have to be there, or someone has to be there on your behalf. When the auction takes place online there is no need to be in a certain place at a certain time. Stay at home (or bid from work) and bid over a period of days.

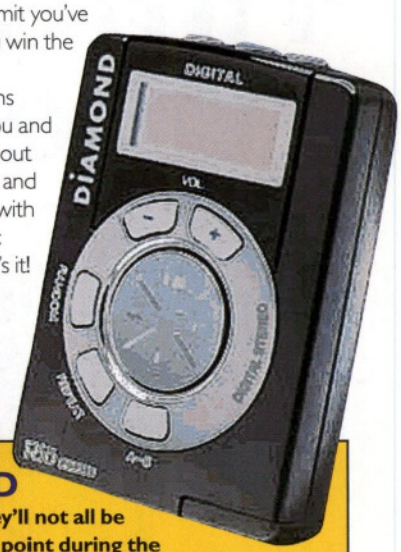
If it's your first time on the site (*www.fsauctions.co.uk*) we suggest that you take a few minutes to browse around and get familiar with our content. Anyone can browse and see what is for sale, but to buy and sell on FSauctions you need to join. Registration is free, and you'll be issued with a password. Then you're ready to trade.

You'll find a list of our main categories on menu on the left-hand side of the homepage. Clicking on these reveals sub-categories. Note the number shown in brackets next to each sub-category, which tells you how many items are available. Clicking on a sub-category will show you all items contained in it, along with the starting and current bids for the item being auctioned – and the auction end date. Selecting individual items will display information posted by the seller and you will be invited to join in the bidding.

When you're ready to go for it, remember the different types of auction. The **straight auction** invites the highest bid over a specified time period. The **reserve auction** invites the highest bid over a specified period as long as a certain price is achieved. The **Dutch auction** allows you to buy multiple quantities of each item. Goods can also be bought at a **fixed price**.

In general, if you want to buy something then select the item you want, enter your registered email address and password plus the amount you want to bid (note the reserve price) and wait.

If someone puts in a higher bid than you FSauctions will email you and invite you to bid again. If you think life is too short to wait around competing with other bidders you can use Robobid, which handles your bids automatically up to a limit you've set. If you win the auction, FSauctions emails you and you sort out payment and delivery with the seller. And that's it!



UP FOR GRABS – FROM A QUID

Bidding starts at £1 for each of the following items. They'll not all be available at once but they'll all be up for grabs at some point during the month of May, so keep coming back to www.fsauctions.co.uk to check on the latest great offers – and the bidding for each starts at £1. Madness!

SUPERSONIC CONCORDE CHAMPAGNE FLIGHT
Fly ten miles high at twice the speed of sound, enjoy a champagne lunch and visit the flight deck of the world's most famous aircraft during a flight over the Atlantic.

NEW FORD PUMA
You've seen the Steve McQueen ad, now you can own a new silver Ford Puma 1.7.

SIGNED MANCHESTER UNITED CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SHIRT
Scrawled upon by all the victorious players from the night it went bonkers in Barcelona.

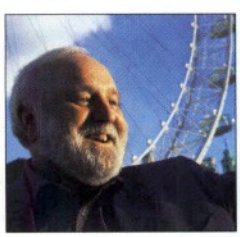
NEW DREAMCAST CONSOLE
Five consoles, in fact. Plus a set of 10 software games and a life-size model of Lara Croft.

DINNER FOR FOUR IN A SUBMARINE
Think carefully about your choice of dining companions – it's hard to leave early.

NEW WAP MOBILE PHONE
Your chance to keep ahead of the Joneses with the latest word in mobile phones. See page xiv if you don't know what one is. Then bid.

DRIVE A FERRARI FOR A WEEKEND
Make vroom-vroom noises when you're driving? No need to with this chance to zoom along in a Ferrari – or, if you're picky, a TVR Griffith, Aston Martin Vantage or a Lotus Elise. Just don't crash it.

NEW MP3 PLAYER
The latest in music technology. Oh, and there's 10 of them available during May.



News

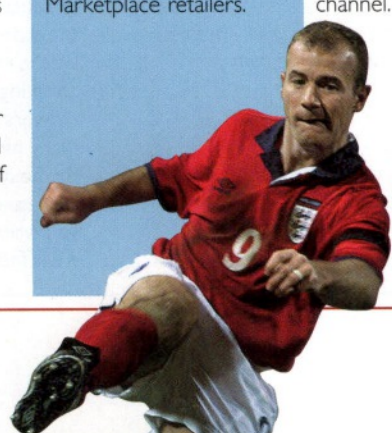
Get tomorrow's papers today with this superb news service. You'll get all the latest UK and foreign stories, together with business news and a complete rundown of headlines as they happen.

Shopping

The Freeserve Shopping channel can provide flowers or food, a car or a computer. Look out for great deals and savings from SHOP@freeserve and now the new Marketplace retailers.

Sport

Whatever your sport, you'll find it on Freeserve. Football, tennis, cricket, rugby, Formula 1 or golf; you can get the results and follow your heroes on the Sport channel.

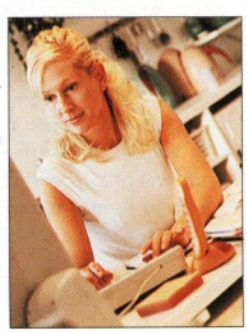


Travel

Click on the Freeserve Travel channel for instant access to a database of 70,000 flights and holidays worldwide. There are always sensational last-minute deals on offer.

Women

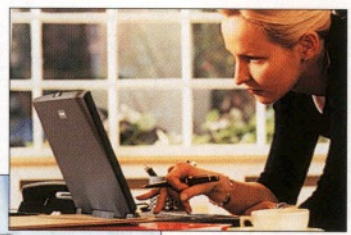
Women on the Web need look no further than the Freeserve iCircle channel for the latest features, information and advice.



PA; Image Bank; Autocar; Nick Wright

Time: no longer of the essence

Take your pick of three ways to enjoy the best of the Internet at your own pace with Freeserve Time



Freeserve has broken new ground by introducing unlimited Internet access. Three different packages have been unveiled, designed to make time online as economical as possible for all users – however regularly they use the Internet.

The first option is pay as you use, while the other two options provide unlimited, unmetered access – one at the evenings and at weekends, the other 24 hours per day – both in exchange for a small monthly fee.

The first option, **No Ties Freeserve Time**, involves no monthly fee. All you do is pay your existing telephone company the cost of the local call to connect to the Internet. You pay no money to Freeserve. This is the standard free-access model which Freeserve pioneered.

The second option, **Off Peak Freeserve Time**, entitles you to unmetered – and therefore unlimited – Internet access from 6pm until 8am on weekdays and all day at weekends. The monthly charge of £6.99 sets you free from watching the clock while surfing the Internet, leaving you free to peruse the Web at your leisure without worrying about the cost.

Off Peak Freeserve Time is perfectly suited to those with 9 to 5 jobs who wouldn't be able to log on during the day anyway. And, of course, it's great for families with schoolkids who can get help with revision and homework from the Net – including the Freeserve Learning channel.

The third option, **Unlimited Freeserve Time**, gives you unmetered, unlimited access to the Internet 24 hours per day, seven days a week. But that's not all the monthly £10 fee entitles you to: you get £10 worth of national or international calls free, and you can even get telephone calls charged at 10 percent below BT's standard rate.

`For more details on how you can find the package to suit your surfing needs, check out *www.freeserve.com/time*.

The deals at a glance

No Ties Freeserve: No monthly charges. Connection calls charged at the local rate.
Off Peak Freeserve: Internet calls free 'off peak' – from 6pm to 8am weekdays and all day at weekends. Monthly £6.99 charge.
Unlimited Freeserve: Internet calls are free all the time. Monthly £10 charge.

'With 1.9 million members, Freeserve is the UK's No.1 for the Internet'

John Pluthero, Chief Executive

NEW ON FREESERVE
Check out some of our great new features

Don't feel taxed

This year, nine million people will have to file their own tax returns. However, you're never alone with Freeserve and we've provided the ultimate online tax resource on our Money channel. The Tax Centre offers a range of tools from tax calculators to pocket guides, and there's an online database of advisers if it all gets too much and you need a little help. Using the Tax Centre will help you save money and time – and avoid the wrath of Hector the Tax Inspector…
www.freeserve.com/money

A new identity for Freeserve

Hopefully by now you'll be getting used to the recent extensive redesign of the Freeserve site. We think it's made life much easier by using an attractive, simplified layout without sacrificing any of the great content which makes Freeserve so popular. It's made the site much easier to get around, and introduced the exciting new Today channel to the list of fun things to do on Freeserve.

Now, we've done it again with the introduction of a brand new logo to take us forward into the 21st Century. The new logo, introduced on 17 April, features a dynamic 'swoosh' design and will be seen on all Freeserve-related products and information from now on.

The attractive new logo, which retains the traditional Freeserve colours of blue and orange, also heralds the arrival of *www.freeserve.com*. The new identity will 'evolve freeserve.net to freeserve.com, illustrating the size and scale that Freeserve now has in the UK market.
www.freeserve.com

powered by freeserve
www.freeserve.com

In the market

Many small businesses want to harness the power of the Internet, but find it all a bit bamboozling and forbidding. Now there's no need to fear, with Freeserve Marketplace. Launched in the last few weeks, Marketplace gives retailers the tools to sell on the Freeserve portal. It's caught the imagination of small retailers – and therefore now offers a great selection of products to shoppers. Some of the stores launched in recent weeks include memorabilia shop Sporting Greats, online florists Flowers Highway and Falcon Golf. Many more are due to go live in the next few weeks, so check it out – and if you don't find what you want, set up your own store…
www.freeserve.com/marketplace

A summer of sport begins on Freeserve

The merry month of May is traditionally a peak of excitement in the sporting calendar. The winter sports season comes to a climax in a plethora of cup finals and league championships, while summer sports are just getting into their stride. Whatever your game, Freeserve Sport will be covering it.

May is, and always has been, a huge month in football. It's the month of the FA Cup Final, of course; this season, on 20 May, Aston Villa and Chelsea battle it out in the world's oldest football competition. It will be the last FA Cup Final played beneath the twin towers of the famous old Wembley stadium.

Villa boss John Gregory will be hoping for a first major honour, but his opposite number Gianluca Vialli may be struggling to juggle his trophies. For at the time of going to press, his Chelsea side were still going great guns in the Champions League, setting up the mouthwatering prospect of a clash with current holders Manchester United on 24 May.

That's not the end of the Cup Finals either, for north of the border Rangers face Aberdeen at Hampden Park on 27 May in the Scottish FA Cup Final. Then there are the league campaigns… whoever your team, we'll bring you the latest news, results and opinion on Freeserve Sport at *www.freeserve.com/sport/football*.

There's a whole different ball game coming to a climax in Rugby Union too, with the end of the Allied Dunbar Premiership season, the Tetley Cup Final on 13 May and the final of the Heineken European Cup on 27 May. Check it out on *www.freeserve.com/sport/planetrugby*.

Meanwhile in Formula 1, Michael Schumacher has scorched off the grid and left the opposition going round in circles.

Chelsea and Villa: finalists

The bandwagon rolls into Barcelona on 7 May, then on to Nürburgring for the European Grand Prix on 21 May. Freeserve will be there with *www.freeserve.com/sport/formula1*.

Also on four wheels, Freeserve has entered the world of motor racing by sponsoring the National Saloon Champion Simon Harrison. Simon will be whizzing round Donington Park and Silverstone during May bringing you the inside track on Freeserve Sport.

Finally, summer sport means cricket's back. England face Zimbabwe in the First Test from 18-22 May, and you can keep up with the action at *www.freeserve.com/sport/cricket*.

powered by freeserve www.freeserve.com

Your Web watch

We've all got our favourites in life, on the Internet and off it. As a result, there will be websites you regularly revisit. Now you can choose to receive a simple notification when the pages change thanks to a great new service called Watch My Web. The completely free service allows you to monitor as many websites as you wish and choose how often you want to be alerted to changes. It makes the Freeserve e.notifier – a pager which redirects your email to your pocket – even better value. So you can keep in touch with the latest football score or keep an eye on your financial portfolio through your pager!
www.pageone.co.uk/freeserve_home.htm

Get in touch with your spiritual self

The Women's Channel at *www.icircle.com* is tailored specifically for women, but as there are different types of women, Freeserve strives to present content for various interests. A good example is a recent link-up with a new kind of astrologer to provide a different style of horoscope.

Britain's leading psychological astrologer, Sonya Roche-Duncan, is providing her own unique kind of forecast on iCircle. In fact, it will be very special indeed: the only psychological astrology service available on the Internet.

Often described as taking stargazing into the 21st Century, Psychological Astrology combines the language and insights of modern psychology with symbolic information gained from the cosmos.

With iCircle, you can even get special discounts on a range of reports and person-to-person consultations with Sonya's company Navigators Astrology Consultants, who also have expertise in Graphology, Tarot, Palmistry and Feng Shui.
www.icircle.com

iCircle www.iCircle.com

Moving messages

Many mobile phone owners are used to receiving and sending SMS text messages with their phones. It's a great, handy way to keep in touch – often when you can't talk on the phone. So how about marrying that technology to your Freeserve email account? It's a good idea, so we've gone and done it. Now, with Freeserve, we'll alert you when you get an email and send you the first 140 characters to your mobile, allowing you to keep on top of all your communications. And, of course, the full email remains on your computer for you to read when access is a bit more handy. For more info and details, check out the site at *www.freeserve.com/communications/fsmobile*

Image Bank; Empics

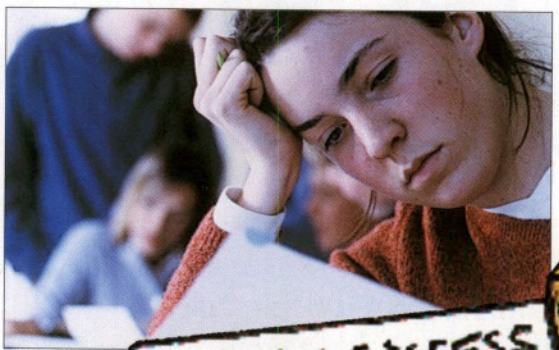
Pass that exam with Uncle SAM

A feeling of unease is settling upon the nation's youth as exam revision takes its toll. However, Freeserve Learning has a way to make revision easier – and much more productive.

Up and down the land, bedroom doors are closing as students retire to their rooms to do battle with revision. It's an annual struggle to soak up the necessary knowledge in order to pass those exams and get the required certificates.

Quite aside from the difficulties of retaining the information, many students find themselves side-tracked by the array of more interesting things to do. The Internet, for example, is a great way to pass the time and avoid work.

However, worried parents concerned that their offspring are frittering away precious revision time with pointless surfing need not always worry – because they might well be doing more constructive revision than they could with their head in a book. More and more students are logging on to Freeserve's Learning channel in order to receive assistance with revision.



Uncle SAM

The Learning channel uses the SAM method of learning, one which is approved by the National Association of Head Teachers – which, as it represents 32,000 heads and deputy heads, will only accept the best. SAM is short for Self-Assessment & Marking. It's a tried and tested method of computer-supported study and it's been proven highly effective.

All too often students imagine that they have to rote-learn lots of useless information before an exam, when in fact their time would be better used learning to apply knowledge and skills to exam-style questions. Just as an examiner would, the SAM learning method gives a mark for each exam-style question. Thinking about what the examiner is looking for is much more likely to get results than trying to remember and regurgitate chapters.

So whether it's GCSEs, A-Levels or SATs the students are swotting up for, it's well worth a visit to Freeserve. The Learning channel offers revision guides based on the 2000 syllabus for both GCSE and A-Levels. And as you'd expect from Freeserve, there's absolutely no charge.

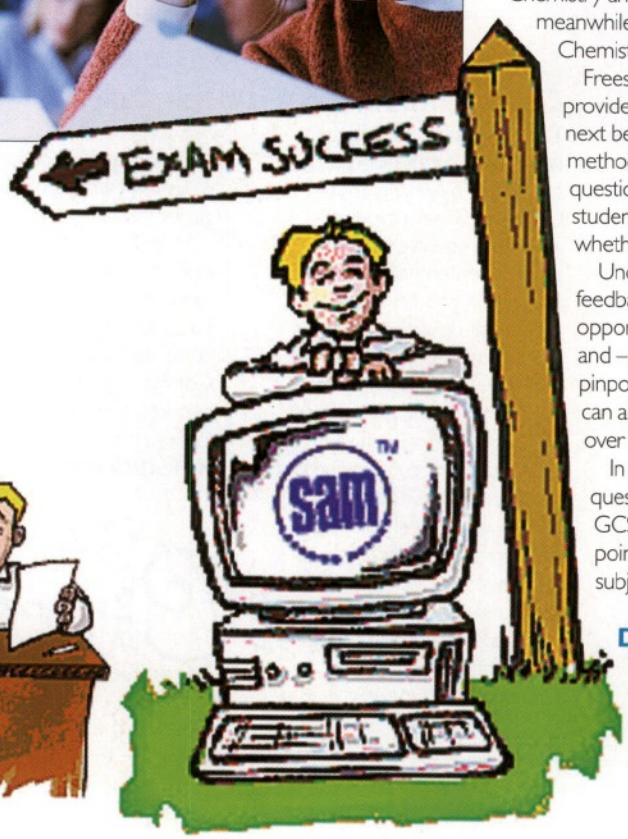
Subject no object

The revision guides cover a wide variety of subjects. GCSE subjects run the gamut from languages to science. The full list is Maths, English, French, German, Spanish, Science, Biology, Chemistry and Physics. A-Level subjects, meanwhile, include Maths, Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Freeserve Learning can't promise to provide the exam answers but can do next best thing. By the time-honoured method of providing exam-style questions, Freeserve Learning gets students attuned for the test ahead, whether it be GCSE or A-Level.

Under the SAM system, instant feedback gives students the opportunity to identify their strengths and – perhaps more importantly – pinpoint weaknesses. New targets can also be set to gauge progress over the course of revision.

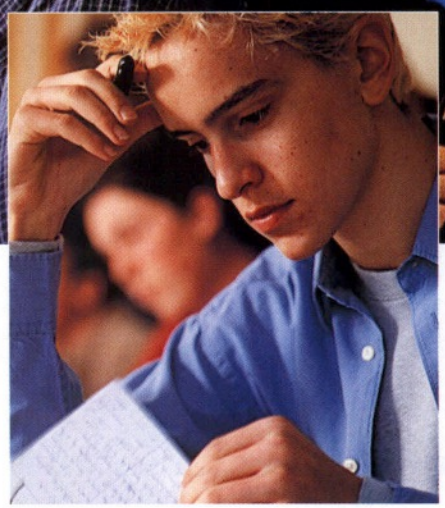
In addition to the exam-style questions, Freeserve Learning's GCSE content includes key revision points to follow for each of the eight subjects covered.



Don't panic!

The key to revision is to have a clear plan. It's no good hurriedly reading through the course books in the hope that

Discuss problems and revision tips with your peers



something will stick. Freeserve Learning helps students by providing practical advice on exactly how to revise – not to 'cram', but to have a sensible pattern of time use. With knowledge of exam technique, students can learn what to learn and avoid pointless memory-testing.

There are also stacks of advice on how to handle D-Day itself: the day of the exam. The best revision in the world will come to nothing if the student goes to pieces on the day, so there are a few words on staying calm and collected. And the best way to do that is to go in confident about the result – something students can be with Freeserve Learning!

Help from everywhere

With Freeserve being an interactive, interlinked community, there's help around every corner. The Smartgroups communities (see over the page for more details) allow the creation of forums, on which students can swap techniques and advice with others hard at work revising.

In addition to tips from the communities, students can get all the revision materials they need elsewhere on Freeserve. A link from Learning takes you to the Shopping channel and, in particular, BOL – Books Online – to get those ever-popular revision aids.

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www.freeserve.com

Things they say about SAM on Learning...

'Freeserve, champion of the people once again. Superbly set out pages, easy to follow, well organised! This is an admirable service that you have set-up. Very useful and very timely.' – Mr Fairhurst, from Wigan (Parent)

'My friend's daughter moved from a grade D in her mock GCSEs in November to a grade B in her final exam.' – Steve, age 37 from the West Midlands (Parent's friend)

'This site must be the best I have visited for revision. Your science exam papers helped me a great deal and your revision material represents the difficulty which could be possible in an exam. Thank you very much!' – Alex, age 16 from Truro (Student)

'This is a brilliant idea. My daughter has reached the level she hopes to achieve in her SATs next week, which has boosted her confidence no end. It has outlined problem areas which we can concentrate on. It is more exciting on the Internet – rather than sitting in front of text books – much easier to get the children to try the test at home this way. THANK YOU!' – Jane, age 36 from Grimsby (Parent)

'Your service is excellent, better than other online revision services. It loads very quickly, is easy to use and is never unavailable.' – Matthew, age 16 from Middlesex (Student)

'I am very impressed with this site regarding the amount of information given for the GCSE subjects listed. One can print out superb test papers and the marking sheet too.' – Philip, age 16 from Surrey (Student)

'I am impressed! I like the interaction, sound effects, and the test papers. Graph work especially sound. Pages loaded quite quickly.' – David, age 59 from Cirencester (Teacher)

'I found this highly useful, especially as the level of detail is what is required for a higher tier candidate – something which is rarely found on this kind of service. Thanks!' – Kenan, age 15 from Northumberland Park (Student)

'I have been using the GCSE exercises with a Basic Skills adult class as revision and consolidation to some of the past year's work. Being able to show work taken from the Net gives an extra dimension to resources and lends credibility to their work.' – Marjorie from Burton on Trent (Teacher)

'What a great service, night before my exams, and very easy to use, I feel like paying you guys a tip.' – Matt, age 16 from Devon (Student)

'I think this service is brilliant, normally I get bored doing any kind of revision but with this method I have to make myself go for a break!' – Sharon-Rayann, age 16 from Oxford (Student)

'I am a maths teacher always looking for different ways for my students to revise, use their computer as an aid to improve their maths and to use it for something other than games. You have produced an excellent site with good exam questions for all levels of the syllabus that we teach. Brilliant!' – Mrs Sissons from Sheffield (Teacher)

Image Bank

Get the group bug

It's often said that whatever you're into, it's on the Internet. So many people now access and contribute to the Web that you can find shrines to just about anything. The world has been opened up by the Web.

Previously fans of any given subject may only have got together once in a blue moon at a convention.

Nowadays you can find others with the same interests and correspond regularly via email, newsgroups and chatrooms. Newsgroups are online discussion groups where people can read and respond to messages posted by other people; chatrooms are much the same but happen 'live'.

At Freeserve, we're dedicated to using the Internet to bring people together, primarily through our Chat channel at *www.freeserve.com/chat*, where you can join in with the chat on any number of subjects from Teens to TV Soaps and Sport to Singles. Or you could join the 3D chatroom, in which you take on a physical identity. Give it a go – it's great!

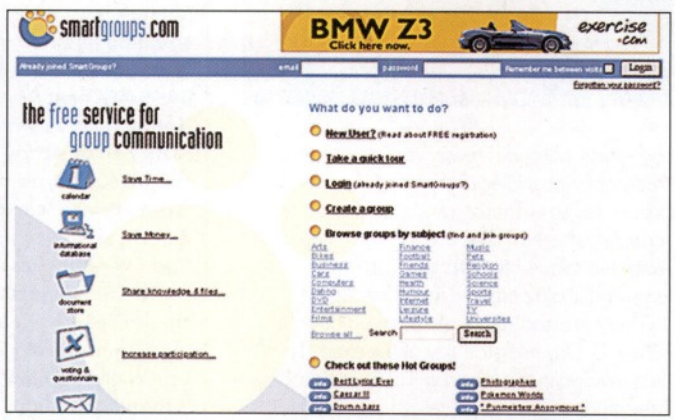
However, you may find that there's something you want to start a discussion about which isn't covered by any of the groups. If that's the case, fear not; you just have to get busy and start your own room or discussion area.

In the quest to provide the best forums for clubs, societies and friends, we've now teamed up with SmartGroups, who make it easy for you to create a discussion area on the Internet. We'll take you through it on these pages, and you'll find it's remarkably easy – so easy, in fact, that SmartGroups is expected to attract more than four million users in its first two years.

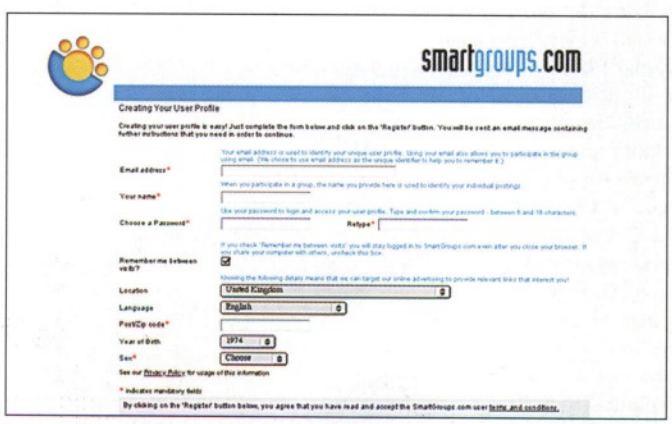
It's expected to be so popular because

COMMUNITIES
communities
forums
chat
site builder
On chat...
Smartgroups
Smartgroups.com is a FREE service designed for clubs,societies, friends or colleagues.
Communicate with your group using a single email address you choose
Co-ordinate group events using the calendar
Create online databases for your group to use
Hold group elections and questionnaires online
Run a bulletin board for you to exchange ideas
Share files with our document store
It's all FREE!
Click here

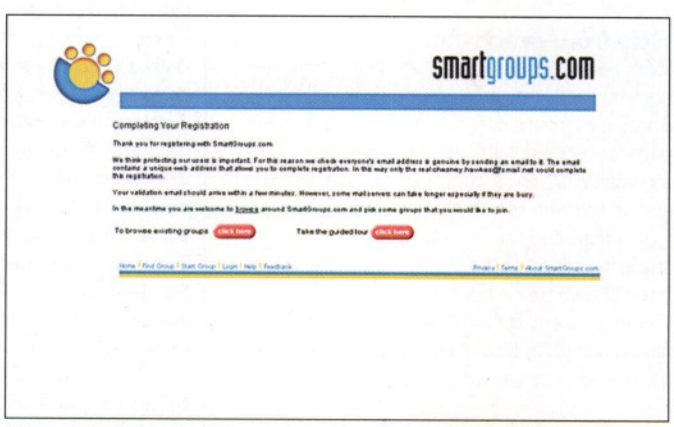
1 Access the Freeserve Communities section at *www.freeserve.com/communities*. You'll find plenty of groups to choose from, but if you wish to start your own group click in the SmartGroups box.



2 Click 'New User', which will explain to you all the benefits of joining. Then click at the bottom to continue, where it says 'Click here to continue'. Easy this, isn't it?



3 Fill in your details to join. You need to include an email address; the password to access your group-building section will be sent to it. Tick the 'Remember me between visits?' box and you won't have to fill out all your details again later. Click Finish to continue.



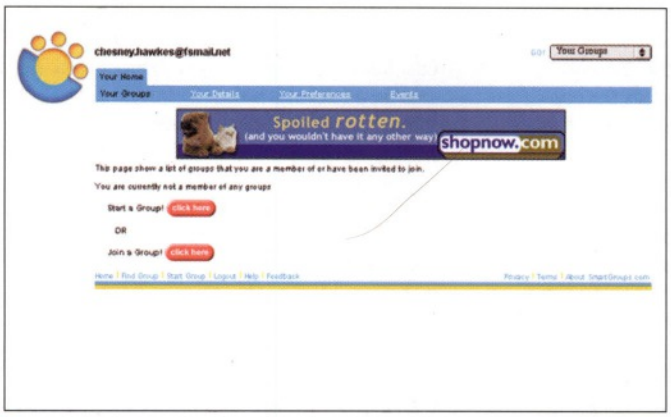
4 You can have a further nosey round the site, but don't forget to check your email for a message from SmartGroups; this will include a tailor-made URL to paste into your browser, which will take you straight into the bit where you build your own group. Now it's getting exciting.

Make friends with others

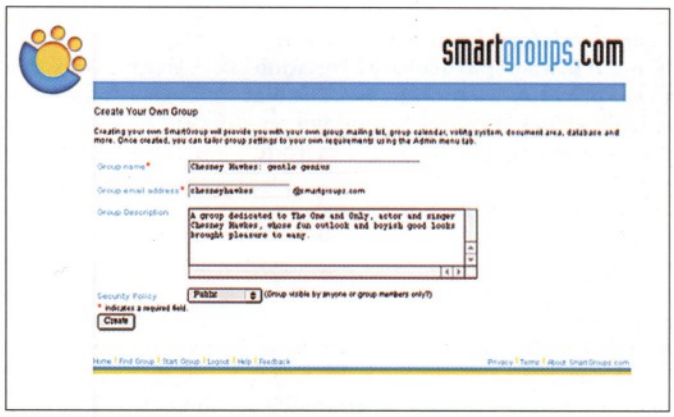
SmartGroups shares an important ethos with Freeserve: using the Internet should be free wherever possible. With SmartGroups on Freeserve, group leaders and organisers can co-ordinate events and activities online for free.

SmartGroups is aimed at anyone who needs to organise, or communicate with, a group of people, from sports or fan club leaders to anyone arranging a one-off social event. By setting up their own group, leaders will be able to do a host of things – send email bulletins, hold online votes, circulate central information and centrally update and store your group's calendars, diaries, noticeboards or club archive documents.

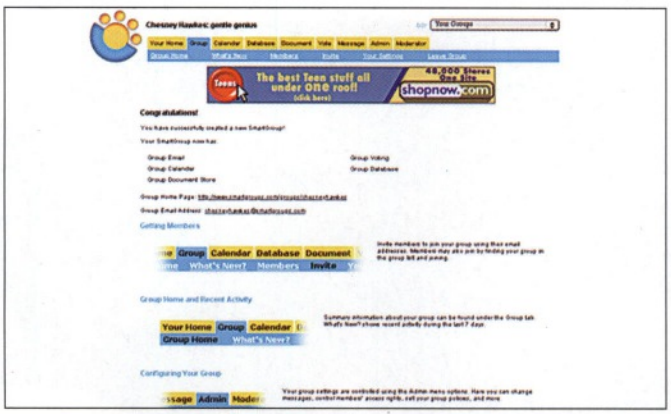
SmartGroups could change the way we use the Web. 'The Internet is supposed to be the key to unlimited global communication. But, we haven't even scratched the surface of what it can do yet,' says SmartGroups MD Richard Prout. 'Online groups represent the third generation of Internet usage. By combining the best aspects of email and the Web, and adding features such as calendars, diaries and online voting, SmartGroups will add an extra dimension to the Internet and make it part of everybody's daily routine.'



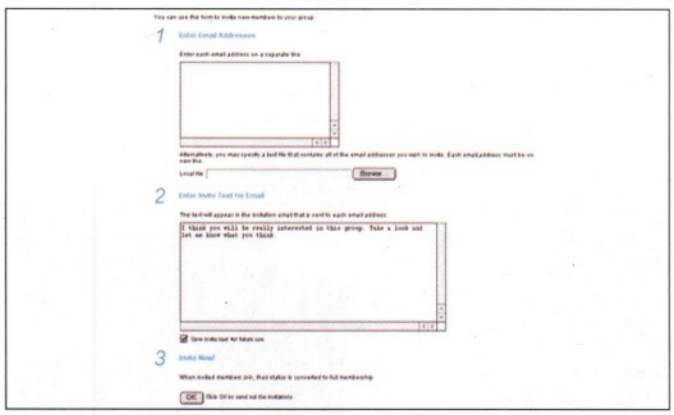
5 Now then, you've got the choice of joining a group or starting a group. There are lots of groups out there, but let's find out how to set up your own.



6 Choose a group name (this will be displayed prominently so name it well), group email address (which will be @smartgroups.com) and, if you like, put in a description so people know what you're about. Decide whether you want to be public (visible by all visitors) or private (group members only).



7 That done, you'll be showered with gifts. You get a group email address, a calendar to organise and publicise events, document store, voting rights, a member database and of course a homepage. Now you can play about with your new toys through the blue and yellow menu at the top.



8 Having done all that, it's not much of a group without other people. You could sit and wait for passing browsers to join in, but it's better to invite people. Enter email addresses of people you think might be interested and a brief description to entice them in. When they accept, you're in a group!

Image Bank

Nice little motor, nice little earner

Buying over the Internet can save you money, and if you're spending thousands on a car you could save thousands too – especially if you're a member of FSmotorist...

Car portal

powered by freeserve
www.freeserve.com

Many words have been written about 'Rip-Off Britain', particularly in relation to car prices. A few months ago, The Net explained how it's possible to make substantial savings by buying cars from abroad via the Internet.

Even so, doubts remained among the public as to how difficult or risky such an operation would be.

However, Freeserve has launched the motoring channel, FSmotorist, at *www.fsmotorist.co.uk*, with the aim of making the whole process of buying and maintaining a car easier. Dedicated to saving drivers money, FSmotorist guides them through the maze of importing cars, but that's not all. There's a host of aftercare benefits which keep saving them hassle – and money.

FSmotorist is the first comprehensive one-stop online shop for car owners, and it's the slashed price of new car purchasing which first catches the eye. FSmotorist offers immediate delivery of new cars, available thousands of pounds below regular showroom prices.

Imported cars are available through FSmotorist at significant savings, but you don't have to buy from over the Channel. At approved dealers UK-wide, prices negotiated by experienced motor industry dealers mean FSmotorist.co.uk can pass on fleet-purchase discounts – thousands of pounds off showroom prices – to private motorists.

The prices get really eye-opening when buying cars. You could save £4,000 on a UK car delivered through FSmotorist suppliers, or maybe even up to £13,000 by buying an imported Range Rover instead of going to your local showroom.

What's more, you're not alone once you drive off the forecourt. All but the most lucky motorists will have to change an exhaust, a battery, a tyre or some other part, and all cars need servicing or repairing at some point. These inevitable running costs can be reduced with FSmotorist membership, which typically saves 25 percent of the parts' cost. For instance, a Club member could save £40 on a tyre, £80 on an exhaust or even put the car through an MOT at half-price.

These savings are brought to members through the clout of Freeserve, the experience of industry dealers and – most importantly of all – strength in numbers. FSmotorist aims to become the biggest fleet organisation in the UK, giving exploited retail customers benefits usually only available to fleet companies.

So what does it cost to save yourself thousands? Membership is just £9.99 per year, which is less than 20p per week. That money gives FSmotorist independence from suppliers sand advertisers – meaning Club members get only the best impartial advice and offers.

www.fsmotorist.co.uk

Online Caroline

powered by freeserve
www.freeserve.com

Ever watched a TV drama like EastEnders, Casualty or Peak Practice and wished you could interact with the characters or affect plotlines? That's the tantalising idea being offered by a new online drama powered by Freeserve.

Online Caroline is a 24-part drama specifically designed for the Internet by digital entertainment company XPT. The website, at *www.freeserve.com/entertainment*, allows you to become Caroline's online friend and advise her on what to do with her life.

ONLINE CAROLINE
MY... STUFF
BOYFRIEND
SEND ME THINGS
* Shower me with gifts, why don't you?
WHAT SHALL I WEA
* Highlights from a lifetime of shopping...
TAKE A MESSAGE
* Listen in to some of my calls...
WHAT ARE YOU LIK
* Let's talk about you...
OK! So I've given you a little bit of everything to start with: piccies of David in the 'My Boyfriend' section; some clothes for me to wear in 'What Shall I Wear?'; a tour of the kitchen in 'My House'; some personal belongings in 'My Stuff'; things you could send me (hint hint) via IT3C; PLUS a little questionnaire in 'What Are You Like?' that you should fill in asap.
Track 3 - Band On The Run - Paul McCartney & Wings
Happy
Unhappy
Lucky

Caroline Close is a twentysomething travel writer who hardly ever travels because her work has dried up. Funnily enough, her boyfriend David is currently away on an extended work junket in Africa; the irony is not lost on Caroline, who's already becoming annoyed by David's constant prattling about babies ('I will take a LOT of persuading before I walk in the way of Cow & Gate.'). Bored and lonely, Caroline needs help in finding a direction.

The action unfolds over the weeks with a mixture of simulated Webcam feeds, personalised emails and audio telephone messages. When you first log on to Online Caroline you can fill in a questionnaire to increase interactivity – well, Caroline can't write to you if you don't tell her what you like.

In return, Caroline will show you round her life, wardrobe, kitchen and photograph albums. You'll also receive highly personalised emails reacting to what happened on your last visit.

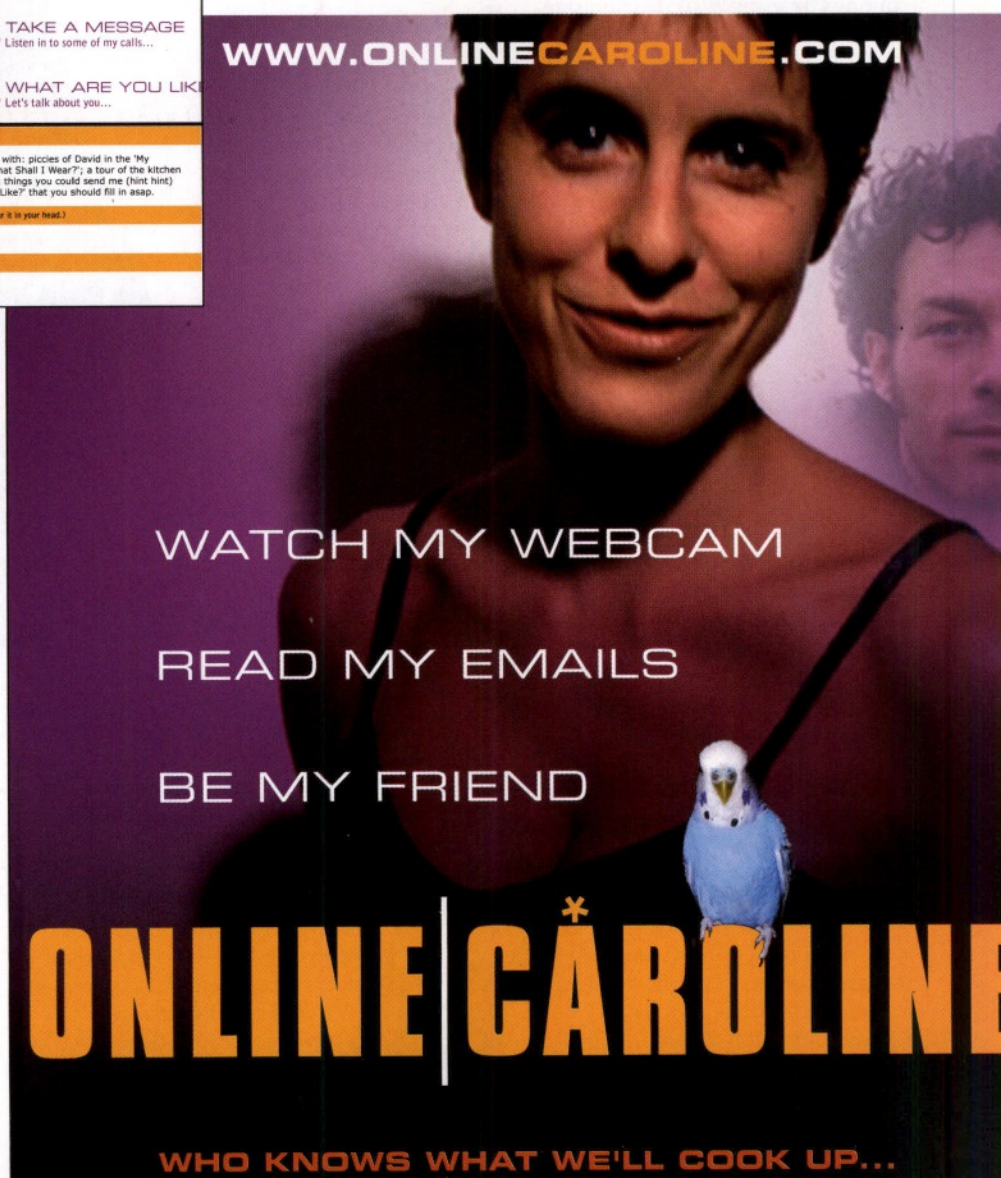
Each time you visit the Online Caroline site you'll find out a little more about Caroline's life, as more plot developments occur. And as you get to know Caroline, you can help her to make decisions about where her life is going.

Because it's interactive, every time you visit the site updates to react to your last visit and the advice you gave Caroline. It all starts off as a typically twentysomething story about food, men, work and shopping, but you'll soon become enmeshed in something a bit deeper as you strive to help Caroline choose what's best for her.

It's all very fast to download, even with the multimedia advantage of audio files and Webcams. There are quirky features all over the site – for instance, you could buy Caroline a bottle of vodka, her favourite tipple – and you even get to meet her budgie, who apparently reminds Caroline of her travels in Australia...

www.freeserve.com/entertainment

Autocar

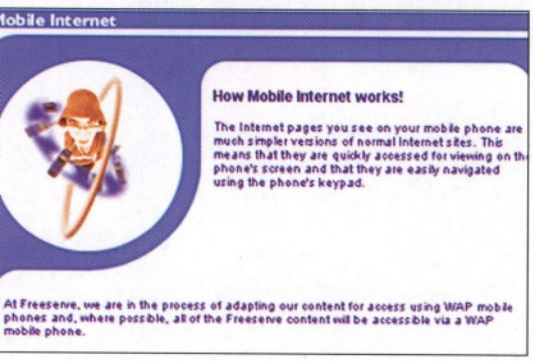


The mobile Internet

WAP: it might sound like something off Batman, but it works like something off Star Trek. Put simply, it's the Internet on your mobile phone, and it's available through Freeserve.

The Internet on your mobile phone? It all sounds very Tomorrow's World, but you can get it today. More and more people are enjoying the connectivity of the Internet with the freedom of mobile phones by using WAP technology.

With WAP, you can surf on the move by accessing the Net from your mobile. It's increasingly popular as more and more WAP-compatible mobile phones are released.


Mobile Internet
How Mobile Internet works!
The Internet pages you see on your mobile phone are much simpler versions of normal Internet sites. This means that they are quickly accessed for viewing on the phone's screen and that they are easily navigated using the phone's keypad.
At Freeserve, we are in the process of adapting our content for access using WAP mobile phones and, where possible, all of the Freeserve content will be accessible via a WAP mobile phone.

The pages from the Internet which you see on your mobile phone are much simpler versions of normal websites. After all, it would take you much longer if you had to wade through the adverts, disclaimers, frames and buttons which are part of the furniture on most Web pages. You're surfing for content, not padding.

So the Internet as you see it on your mobile phone is a refined version, with less text and no images, quickly accessible for viewing on your phone's screen. Just as on your PC, you can bookmark your favourite sites. And it's also easily navigable using your keypad – you'll soon forget about ever using a mouse as you quickly flick through screens.

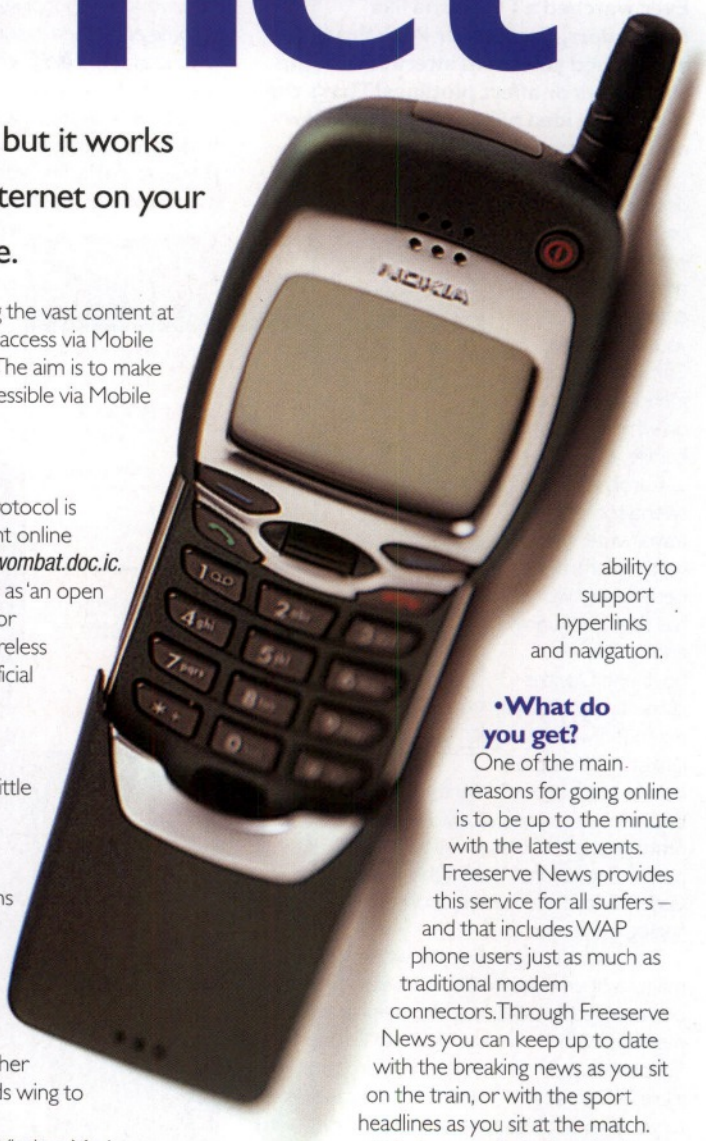
Freeserve is adapting the vast content at *www.freeserve.com* for access via Mobile Internet WAP phones. The aim is to make all possible content accessible via Mobile Internet.

•What's WAP?

Wireless Application Protocol is defined (by the excellent online technical dictionary at *wombat.doc.ic.ac.uk/foldoc/index/html*) as 'an open international standard for applications that use wireless communication'. The official body developing WAP, the WAP Forum (*www.wapforum.org*), understandably goes a little further and calls it 'The de-facto worldwide standard for providing Internet communications and advanced telephony services to digital mobile phones, pagers, personal digital assistants and other wireless terminals'. In other words, it's the way words wing to things without wires.

It does this by using Wireless Markup Language (WML) rather than the Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) used for Web pages. As a computer 'language', WML isn't too far removed from those scrolling JavaScript bars you see on websites.

Many mobile phone users have now become accustomed to using SMS text messaging as a way to receive or send information. One way of looking at things is to compare SMS to email and WAP to the Internet, with its increased degree of interactivity and ability to support hyperlinks and navigation.

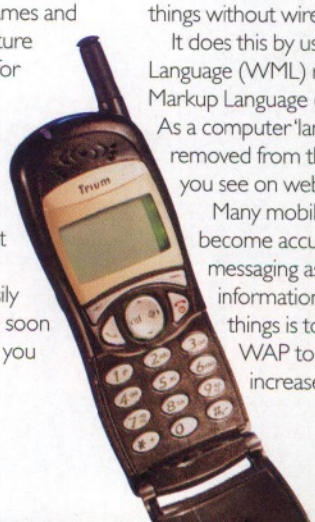


•What do you get?

One of the main reasons for going online is to be up to the minute with the latest events. Freeserve News provides this service for all surfers – and that includes WAP phone users just as much as traditional modem connectors. Through Freeserve News you can keep up to date with the breaking news as you sit on the train, or with the sport headlines as you sit at the match.

What you can't do is surf to just any Web page. The protocol is different (WML as opposed to HTML), meaning your phone simply wouldn't understand the site or be able to access it. That said, more and more sites, particularly new ones, are becoming WAP-friendly as the medium takes off.

You also have total control over your email: you can send, receive, write, read, reply, forward and delete mail via your phone. Mail management is as easy as always and you're dealing with your usual Freeserve email account – remember, you can now access your

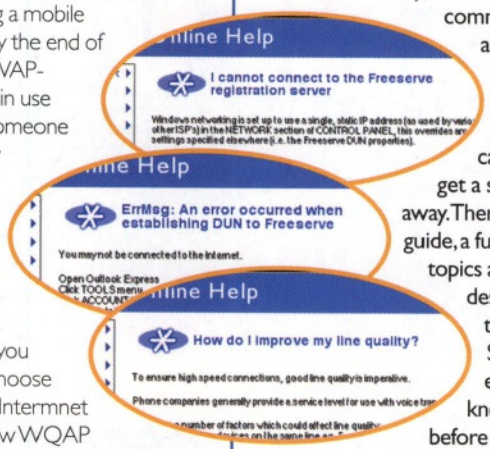


powered by freeserve www.freeserve.com

freeserve.co.uk, fsnet.co.uk or fsbusiness.co.uk accounts through your Mobile Internet phone even when you're away from your home PC.

•What's needed?

Before you clamber onto your mobile and start entering URLs, you should realise that not all phones are WAP-compatible. The newer models are, but if you have one of the old house-brick types you might be out of luck. Keep it in mind when you're next choosing a mobile phone – it's thought that by the end of the year over 100 million WAP-compatible devices will be in use worldwide. So if you see someone glaring at their mobile, they might just not be changing their tones or playing Snake – they could be checking their share prices or the sports results.


Online Help
I cannot connect to the Freeserve registration server
Online Help
ErrMsg: An error occurred when establishing DUN to Freeserve
You may not be connected to the Internet.
Online Help
How do I improve my line quality?

If you have a BT Cellnet Mobile Internet phone (if you don't and you'd like one, choose from our range of Mobile Intermnet WAP phones from the new WQAP store ***www.freeserve.com/mobileinternet***), you can access Freeserve by selecting 'BT Cellnet Internet Services' and finding Freeserve in the main menu. Click and you're in to Freeserve News and Mail.

To set up Freeserve Mail, click on the Mail link and select your e-mail domain name – freeserve.co.uk, fsnet.co.uk or fsbusiness.co.uk. Then enter your username – the bit between the @ and the dot before the domain name (if your email address is tony@blair.freeserve.co.uk, your username is blair).

Enter your password as you do to retrieve email on your PC, then choose a PIN number of at least four digits. Once you have selected this you don't need your password again to read your emails on the move!

If you're not a BT Cellnet customer, fear not. The Freeserve Mobile Internet services are available to users of any network, including Orange, Vodafone, one2one and Virgin. Non-BT Cellnet customers can access all the services by entering ***wap.freeserve.com*** into the mobile phone's Web browser. If necessary, check your phone's instruction manual for directions on how to do this.

•What's the damage?

Freeserve do not charge at all for Mobile Internet services. Each time you use the service you just pay the normal mobile network call rates for as long as you are connected – just like surfing the Internet. For more information on WAP, try

www.freeserve.com/mobileinternet
www.wap.net/wapfaq.html
www.wapforum.org/faqs/index.htm

Online help

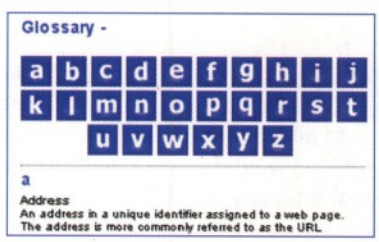
We've put together an awesome set of answers for all your technical queries. It's available on our website – and it's free!

What are my options?

If you're new to the Net, Freeserve is committed to making it as easy as possible for you to get online. We've designed the help section on the Freeserve website so you can turn to Freeserve and get a straight answer, straight away. There's a complete content guide, a full alphabetical index of topics and a find function – all designed to take you straight to the answer you need. Separate sections deal with everything you need to know to avoid problems before set-up, and tell you what to expect as you begin to install the software from the CD-ROM onto your machine. It really is that simple!

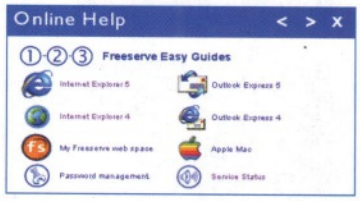
How does online help work?

It's easy! There are four main sources of information. Read through the descriptions below and you'll soon see which best suits the type of query you have. Then connect to Freeserve, visit the help section and get all your questions answered quickly.


Glossary -
a b c d e f g h i j
k l m n o p q r s t
u v w x y z
a
Address
An address in a unique identifier assigned to a web page.
The address is more commonly referred to as the URL

The Glossary

If there's an Internet expression you don't understand, turn to our glossary first. It's more than likely to be there.



The Easy Guides

If there's an area of your Net use that is causing you difficulty, turn to our Easy Guides for a complete solution. You'll find answers sorted by subject.

Questions and Answers

If there's a specific question you need answered, turn to our Q&A section for rapid help. First select the general area from our drop-down menu, then a specific question. You may find your question has already been answered.

Contacts

If you still need help, you can email our support staff. They're the same people who staff our phone helpdesks, and they're trained to deal with your queries. Direct email addresses are listed on the contacts page. They'll be happy to help you!

How do I find answers on the CD?

Alternatively, there's also a fully comprehensive Help feature on the Freeserve start-up CD-ROM. When you put the CD in your machine you'll be given four options. The help button takes you to a comprehensive set of instructions to enable you to get online with Freeserve.

Phoneline help

Our experts are on call 24 hours a day

Using Freeserve's online help couldn't be simpler, but from time to time you might have a direct question for one of our experts. To help you get the most out of your connection, Freeserve's Technical Support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Make sure you've consulted our online help before you call, as you may find we've already answered your question. If not, our trained staff can provide you with instant answers in plain English on a range of Internet subjects. Calls cost 50p per minute.

PC Support 0906 2517517 Mac 0906 7234000

Nick Wright

The UK's No1 for the Internet and it's easy to see why

NO SUBSCRIPTION
You can explore whatever you want, whenever you want, without worrying about monthly subscription charges.

THE BEST PORTAL
Our homepage is second to none, and is your gateway to all that Freeserve has to offer. *Internet Magazine* recently rated it "the best portal from any UK ISP."

MORE TO DISCOVER
Over 30 channels including news, sport, travel, shopping, business, women's interest and much, much more - there's something for everyone.

FREE E-MAIL YOU CAN ACCESS ANYWHERE
Freeserve members can now send and receive* e-mails even when away from home. With access through any PC, anywhere in the world with **fs**mail.

free serve

www.freeserve.net

Sign up on-line or pick up a free CD at any branch of

Dixons PC WORLD THE COMPUTER SUPERSTORE Currys The Link @Jakarta

*Internet access is normally subject to standard call rates

stepbystep

This month: how to secure a domain name, browsers explained and online chat. Plus, we show you the ways and means of creating your very own Web site

Your technical problems well sorted with our easy-to-follow guide to the Net

WHAT IS THE INTERNET?

The Internet is a huge global network of computers, with literally millions of machines connected together across the planet.

HOW DO I GET ON IT?

All you really need is a computer, a modem, an Internet Service Provider (ISP) and a telephone line.

WHAT CAN I DO THERE?

1 **Surf the Worldwide Web.**
2 Send someone an email.
3 **Take part in a newsgroup discussion.**
4 Make friends and get chatting with people from all over the world.

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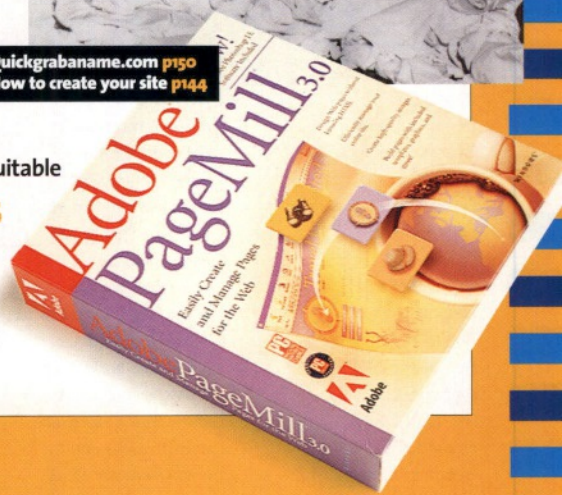


surprise yourself
Insert this disc no
and get LineOne
FREE for one month
We'll prove we give you more
than any other internet provider.
They'll do anything to get you online
free easy fun
in home
the free internet service!

What Service Provider?

June 2000 Every week there are more and more ISPs coming out of the woodwork. Let *the net* help you decide which is right for you

What is an ISP?

An Internet service provider, or ISP, is a company that connects you to the Internet. All you need do is exploit the provider's permanent Net connection by connecting to it.

Get the best ISP deal

Right now, literally hundreds of ISPs are vying for your business – which is great news for consumers. But to help you make a truly informed decision, we've tested the best service providers on the market.

Below, you'll find our ratings for the current crop of the best ISPs looking to connect you. There are several companies that are now offering completely free access – and that includes the price of the phone call that connects you to the Internet. LocalTel pioneered this service back in the spring with the launch of Screaming.Net. Since then several companies have started to offer free calls to the Net at certain times of the day. CallNeto800 has also launched and is offering completely free access at any time of the day. This new breed of ISP is set to change the landscape of Net access in the UK, as several other service providers investigate the possibility of offering completely free access in a bid to keep up with new trends. In other words, the future couldn't be brighter for Net consumers, as the price of getting online continues to go down.

Call costs

It's worth checking how much you'll be paying for the phone calls that connect you to the Net. Apart from the new breed of free services, nearly every ISP charges local call rates. For BT customers, this means 4p/min on weekdays between 8am-6pm; 1.5p/min during off-peak times, and 1p/min at the weekend. Check with your phone company.

Speeding up

To say things are only going to get faster is an understatement. BT is currently trialling ADSL (Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line). It will offer an 'always on' high speed connection to the Internet with data delivery speeds of 10-40 times a conventional modem. At the moment, most modems operate at 56kbps (kilobits per second) or less. For more info see ***www.bt.com/adsl/***

BEGINNER'S TIP

Put the phone number you use to dial up to the Internet on your BT Friends and Family list.

INTERMEDIATE TIP

Set up several free accounts. If for any reason you cannot connect to one provider, simply try another one. There's no limit to how many accounts you have.

ADVANCED TIP

Consider installing an extra phone line. It means you can have one for the phone and one for your modem, so you can use the Internet as much as you like.

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS

ISP NAME	WEB ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION	TYPE OF SERVICE
AngliaNet Limited	***www.anglianet.co.uk***	Dial-up, web hosting and design for home and business users	Unlimited
AOL	***www.aol.co.uk***	A large ISP offering proprietary software to try to make connecting painless	Unlimited
Aviators Network	***www.aviators.net***	An ISP designed with aircraft-related content for the pilot and the enthusiast	Unlimited
BREATHE **FREE**	***www.breathe.co.uk***	Well-established free ISP. Easy-to-use site design	Unlimited
Btclick.com **FREE**	***www.btclick.com***	The free Internet service from BT	Unlimited
BT Internet	***www.btinternet.com***	Another Internet arm of BT, offering a full access package	Unlimited
Bun **FREE**	***www.bun.com***	The free ISP offering of *The Sun* newspaper	Unlimited
Cable and Wireless Lite **FREE**	***www.cwcom.net***	Free Net access for CW customers	Unlimited
CALLNET **FREE**	***www.callnetuk.com***	Innovative free ISP offering enhanced Web-based services	Unlimited
CIX	***www.cix.co.uk***	The Compulink Information eXchange. Provides Internet conferencing accounts	Unlimited
ClaraNET Ltd	***www.clara.net***	Subscription based ISP with a range of account options to suit any needs	Unlimited
Compuserve	***www.compuserve.com***	Long-standing ISP which offers proprietary software to aid ease-of-use and level of service	Unlimited
Connect Free **FREE**	***www.connectfree.net***	One of the very first free ISPs	Unlimited
CYBERphile Internet	***www.cyberphile.co.uk***	Business-oriented, Midlands-based provider. Specialists in leased lines, LANs, firewalls, ISDN etc	Unlimited
Dabsol **FREE**	***www.dabsol.net***	Free ISP with online sign-up help and comprehensive features	Unlimited
Demon Internet	***www.demon.co.uk***	The UK's original dial-up account today aspires to be the industry's 'Premium' service	Unlimited
Direct Connection	***www.dircon.net***	Home and business ISP offering global roaming among their services	Unlimited
Easynet Ltd	***www.easynet.net***	Subscription based dial-up service. Winner of best European ISP at this year's ISPA awards	Unlimited
EidosNet **FREE**	***www.eidosnet.co.uk***	EidosNet is brought to you by Eidos, publishers of *Tomb Raider* and other great games	Unlimited
Enterprise plc	***www.enterprise.net***	Subscription based ISP with a host of features including game and news servers	Unlimited
F9 Free **FREE**	***www.f9.net.uk***	Free ISP from previously subscription-only service Force 9	Unlimited
Firstnet Services Ltd	***www.firstnet.co.uk***	Business Internet solution provider	Unlimited
Free Internet **FREE**	***www.free-internet.co.uk***	Free access, free mail and Web space. Comprehensive service in a neat package	Unlimited
FREENET **FREE**	***www.freenet.co.uk***	More free access with a gaming bias. Online auto sign-up and newsgroups add to the interest	Unlimited
Free Online **FREE**	***www.free-online.net***	Straightforward free ISP offering news and email	Unlimited
Freeserve **FREE**	***www.freeserve.net***	Free provider from the Dixons Group of companies	Unlimited
Free to You **FREE**	***www.freezyou.co.uk***	No-frills free ISP with online sign-up	Unlimited
Freewire **FREE**	***www.freewire.net***	Free ISP with no sign-up requirements	Unlimited
Freezone **FREE**	***www.freezone.co.uk***	A free ISP offering the usual package in a smart format	Unlimited

what service provider?

ISPs explained Using our easy-to-follow guide

FREE CONNECTIONS
There are now many companies that will get you on to the Internet without charging a subscription fee – the only thing you pay for is the price of the phone call that connects you.

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES
Despite the plethora of free ISPs springing up, there are still many which charge a flat monthly fee. These generally offer free technical support; most free ISPs charge by the minute.

CONTENT PROVIDERS
Content providers also charge to get you online, but provide exclusive content to members, and a sense of 'community'.

How the tables work

Description
A brief description of the services offered by the ISP in question.

Type of service
Tells you whether there is any restriction on how often you can use the Internet.

Phone number
The number to ring if you want to sign up.

Email addresses
Some service providers give you only one email address, others provide as many as you want.

Content
Outlines whether the service provider in question provides its own content and whether it is exclusive to its users.

Macintosh support
Not all service providers offer software and technical support for Macs, preferring to concentrate on PCs – so be sure to check this column out if you're an Apple user.

Web space
If you are interested in designing your own Web page, most Internet Service Providers will give you space to store it on. 2Mb should be enough for most people's requirements.

Set-up fee
Some ISPs charge a fee to open an account.

Monthly charge
If you don't go with a free ISP, then you'll pay a set amount per month to be online.

Phone support charges
Technical support is great – as long as you're not having to pay a fortune to benefit from it. Find out how much free service providers charge per minute for calls to their technical support desks.

Telephone support hours
The hours when the technical support desk will be open to take your calls.

Our ISP testing is carried out by NetBasics, an independent company specialising in providing ISP information for consumers and businesses. NetBasics makes every effort to ensure that the data presented to you is correct. The publishers of *the Net* and NetBasics cannot be held liable for any damages caused by the publication of this data. Any Internet service provider that wishes to be included in the evaluation programme should contact eval@netbasics.com **For more information on NetBasics, visit its Web site at *www.netbasics.com*.**

PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS	CONTENT	MAC SUPPORT	WEB SPACE	SET-UP FEE	MONTHLY CHARGE	PHONE SUPPORT CHARGES	PHONE SUPPORT HOURS
01473 211922	1	None	Yes	5Mb	None	11.75	Mobile	9-5 M-F, 8-9 S-S
0800 3765432	5	Massive amount of content	Yes	10Mb	0	16.95	Free	8-10.30M-F 9-9.30S-S
0700 2842867	1	'Flightalogue' lists a host of goodies	No	15Mb	0	11.75	Standard	9-9 7 days
0870 6006006	5	Entertainment, sport, shopping, finance etc	Yes	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0800 800001	Unlimited	From Excite	Yes	0	0	0	50p per minute	8-12 Midnight
0800 800001	5	None	Yes	10Mb	0	11.75	Local	24/7
0845 3063636	5	Online dating, Bunshopping, *The Sun* online etc	Yes	25Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0800 0923 001	5	Channels and account administration	No	20 Mb	0	0	National	24/7
0171 3358300	5	Chat servers, channels, services, Web news	Yes	20Mb	0	0	Free	24/7
0845 3555050	Unlimited	None	Yes	30Mb	0	17.61	Local call	9-10 M-F, 12-6 S-S
0800 3582828	Unlimited	None	Yes	25Mb	0	8.99	Free	24/7
0990 000200	5	A large range of channels and a search engine	No	10Mb	0	16.95	National	8-12 Midnight
Sign up online	Unlimited	Channel-based content provided by Virgin	No	Unlimited	0	0	Unavailable	24/7
01543 454840	1	None	Yes	0.1Mb	0	11.74	Standard	8.30-6 M-F
Sign up online	Unlimited	None	No	Unlimited	0	0	Metered	24/7
0181 3711234	Unlimited	None	Yes	20Mb	0	11.75	Local	24/7
0800 0720000	Unlimited	User zone containing handy member services	Yes	20Mb	0	13.50	Local	9-9 7days
0171 6814444	Unlimited	None	Yes	2Mb	0	11.99	Free	24/7
Sign up online	Unlimited	Free access to the Mplayer games network	No	20Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
01624 677666	Unlimited	None	Yes	5Mb	0	11.75	Local	9-10 M-F 10-4 S-S
0800 0737800	Unlimited	None	Yes	15Mb	0	0	National	7-11, 7 Days
0113 294 4224	Unlimited	Search engines and support	Yes	10Mb	0	12.50	Local	Business hours
Sign up online	1	Newsgroups and IE5 download	No	10Mb	0	0	Metered	24/7
01329 511611	Unlimited	Games links and independent status	Yes	20Mb	0	0	National rates	9-6 7 days
0870 7060504	5	None	Yes	Unlimited	0	0	Premium rate	24/7
0990 500049	Unlimited	Extensive channel based content	Yes	15Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
Sign up online	Unlimited	Search engine page and technical support	No	10Mb	0	0	Available soon	n/a
Sign up online	Unlimited	None	No	50Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0870 7441111	Unlimited	On-site search engine access	No	20Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS

ISP NAME	WEB ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION	TYPE OF SERVICE
Gateway 2000 **FREE**	***www.ukgateway.net***	An ISP service from the hardware retailers of the same name. Packaged with Gateway computers	Unlimited
Go Free **FREE**	***www.gofree.co.uk***	Free ISP offering online sign-up, complete with helpline	Unlimited
IC24 **FREE**	***www.ic24.net***	The free ISP service of Mirror Group Newspapers	Unlimited
LineOne **FREE**	***www.lineone.net***	BT's Internet service has recently dropped its subscription charge	Unlimited
London Web Comm Ltd	***www.londonweb.net***	An emphasis on corporate clientele. Useful London Local Directory	Unlimited
Netcom	***www.netcom.net.uk***	A comprehensive range of services to the home and business user	Unlimited
Net Communications Ltd	***www.netcom.co.uk***	Norwich-based ISP, primarily aimed at the corporate user	Unlimited
Nildram	***www.nildram.net***	Subscription-based ISP with a host of features	Unlimited
OrbitalNet **FREE**	***www.orbitalnet.co.uk***	Dial-up, Web hosting and design for home and business users	Unlimited
Paradise Internet Network Service	***www.pins.co.uk***	Paradise Internet is a subscription provider which also authors software	Unlimited
Screaming.net **FREE**	***www.screaming.net***	The pioneer of the free access/free phone call model	Unlimited
Sniff Out **FREE**	***www.sniffout.net***	Free ISP with online sign-up help and comprehensive features	Unlimited
Sonnet Internet Ltd	***www.sonnet.co.uk***	Packages and solutions for the private and business user	Unlimited
This is it! **FREE**	***www.thisisit.co.uk***	End-user targeted free ISP	Unlimited
UK Fantastic **FREE**	***www.ukfantastic.net***	Spirited free ISP offering good online technical help	Unlimited
UK Online Ltd **FREE**	***www.ukonline.co.uk***	A family-friendly free ISP with plenty of shareware and gaming software. Sign up online	Unlimited
UUNet	***www.uk.uu.net***	The most long-established provider. Residential and business facilities available	Unlimited
Virgin Net **FREE**	***www.virgin.net***	The long-standing ISP now offering a stylish free Internet access service	Unlimited
Which? Online	***www.which.net***	A free ISP from the eponymous consumer affairs magazine	Unlimited
Wireplay Internet **FREE**	***www.wireplay.com***	Wireplay is an online games network offering access to Intranet-based fast games servers	Unlimited
X-Stream Network **FREE**	***www.x-stream.com***	Offers enhanced member services, such as occasional free phone calls to the Net	Unlimited

Network performance

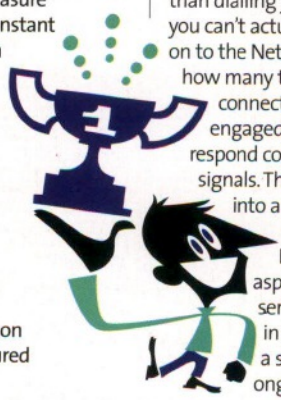
June 2000

Independent testing carried out by NetBasics – contact eval@netbasics.com

We test the best ISPs in the country for the reliability and speed of their connection. The tests are conducted in three areas and a star rating is given indicative of their performance. The three areas of testing are:

VARIATION IN MODEM SPEED

This is a gauge to measure whether you get a constant speed once a modem connects to an ISP. ISPs should offer a constant speed and we measure any variation. Each ISP starts with 100 percent and loses position the greater the variance in connection. This is achieved by comparison so that no ISP is favoured above others.



VARIATION IN TIME TO CONNECT

This section of the test measures the variation in how long it takes to get connected to your ISP. The reading is taken from the stage between clicking 'Connect' and then physically connecting.

AVAILABILITY

There's nothing more frustrating than dialling your ISP and finding you can't actually get through and on to the Net. This area measures how many times an ISP refuses to connect, either through the engaged tone, or if it does not respond correctly to modem signals. The results are combined into a single reading giving us a fair way to chart ISPs based on relevant aspects of their dial-in service. The results shown in the chart are based on a sample of 50 ISPs from ongoing tests.

FIRSTNET Services Limited

1	Firstnet	★★★★★	26	Freenet	★★★★
2	Netcom	★★★★★	27	Freeserve	★★★★
3	Net Commun.	★★★★★	28	Free To You	★★★★
4	AngliaNet	★★★★★	29	Dabsol	★★★★
5	Cyberphile	★★★★★	30	Bun	★★★★
6	UUNet	★★★★★	31	Eisdosnet	★★★★
7	Wireplay	★★★★★	32	Easynet	★★★★
8	Nildram	★★★★★	33	Go Free	★★★
9	Enterprise	★★★★★	34	Compuserve	★★★
10	BT Internet	★★★★★	35	Breathe	★★★
11	LineOne	★★★★★	36	AOL	★★★
12	Aviators Network	★★★★★	37	VIrgin Net	★★★
13	Direct Connection	★★★★★	38	Claranet	★★★
14	Callnet	★★★★★	39	UK Online	★★★
15	London Web	★★★★★	40	X-Stream Network	★★★
16	Gateway 2000	★★★★★	41	Screaming.net	★★★
17	Sonnet Internet	★★★★★	42	OrbitalNet	★★
18	Freewire	★★★★★	43	Which? Online	★★
19	Free Internet	★★★★★	44	CIX	★★
20	Paradise Internet	★★★★★	45	Cable and Wireless	★★
21	This is it	★★★★★	46	IC24	★★
22	BT Click	★★★★	47	Freezone	★★
23	Free Online	★★★★	48	UK Fantastic	★★
24	Sniff Out	★★★★	49	Connect Free	★★
25	F9 Free	★★★★	50	Demon Internet	★★

what service provider?

PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS	CONTENT	MAC SUPPORT	WEB SPACE	SET-UP FEE	MONTHLY CHARGE	PHONE SUPPORT CHARGES	PHONE SUPPORT HOURS
At Gateway Stores	Unlimited	None	No	10Mb	0	0	Free	24/7
Sign up online	Unlimited	None	No	20Mb	0	0	Metered	24/7
0870 9090262	Unlimited	Channel based content with news, sport, weather	No	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0800 111210	5	News, shopping, sport, community etc	Yes	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	8-Midnight M-Sa
0181 3494500	3	None	Yes	5Mb	17.63	14.68	Standard	9-9 M-Sa
0870 5668008	20	A business oriented portal site	Yes	25Mb	0	14.95	National	24/7
01603 444 444	1	None	No	20Mb	25.00	10.00	National	Business hours
01296 319 103	Unlimited	None	Yes	25Mb	0	10.00	National	8am-9pm M-S
01233 646 505	5	User zone containing handy member services	Yes	5Mb	0	0	Local	Business hours
01256 414863	1	None	Yes	2Mb	17.63	9.40	National	11-7 M-F
Sign up at Tempo	Unlimited	Travel, entertainment, business, sport etc	No	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
01883 742 510	Unlimited	Channel-based layout with news, shopping etc	Yes	20Mb	0	0	National	8-8 M-S
0171 8912000	Unlimited	None	Yes	5Mb	0	12.50	National	9-9 M-S
0906 9124000	Unlimited	None	No	20Mb	0	0	£1 per minute	24/7
Sign up online	Unlimited	None	Yes	5Mb	0	0	£1 per minute	24/7
01749 333333	1	None	Yes	Unlimited	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0870 600 4454	5	UUNet news, products and services	Yes	60Mb	Call	Call	Email/online only	By email
0500 558800	5	Several Virgin channels	Yes	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0645 830240	1	Online shopping and consumer affairs content	Yes	2Mb	11.75	14.75	Free	24/7
0845 757 7577	0	Games news, games chat, games add-ons	No	0	0	0	50p per minute	12pm-12 am, 7 days
0870 7306466	1	Chat, news, lifestyle, shopping, etc	No	20Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7

ISP NEWS IN BRIEF All the service provider news you need

Now even more fun and games online

Sega has revealed plans in the US for its new ISP, SegaNet, which promises to give subscribers a free Dreamcast and keyboard if they sign up for two years.

SegaNet will be priced at $21.95 a month for unlimited usage, and the scheme is set to be launched in August.

It is intended that a major Internet backbone provider will join in partnership with SegaNet, to provide a competitive service. There are currently no mention of plans to launch the scheme in the UK, but trends which take off in the US often follow in this country.

www.sega.com

EASY, FUN AND FAST
Do you want a FREE website? Ok Yes Of Course! GO!
SEGA
Sega Store
Community
Customer Service
Sega Corporate
Sega Dreamcast
View A Game
Dreamcast Console
Dreamcast Games
IT'S THINKING...
MEET SEAMAN
ChuChu Rocket!
Sega.com announces SegaNet!
In Sept. sign up for superfast ISP service, play a slew of games online, and get a FREE Dreamcast (or $200 if you've got one). All via the new, revolutionary SegaNet.
CHECK it OUT
A Message from Ulala
Download this musical postcard from Space Channel 5's supernova star. Then spread the groove and email it to your friends. Pre-order the game starting 5.01.00.
CHECK it OUT
Get into Get into Time Stalkers!
Learn all about the friends, foes, & heroic quests that await you in this deep new RPG.
CHECK it OUT
Home Store Community Customer Service Console Games Corporate
Sega: launching a new ISP to appeal to both Dreamcast owners and those without

£50 equals unlimited surfing at Breathe

Breathe in

ISP breathe.net has launched its 'free for life' service, offering users unlimited surfing for a one-off fee of £50.

Unlike traditional ISPs users, breathe.net subscribers will not pay call charges or monthly fees after paying the initial charge.

The announcement came as a wealth of ISPs, including AltaVista, offered a similar scheme. However, breathe.net was only the second completely free service to actually go live. To avoid problems suffered by the first, CallNet, breathe is limiting itself to 50,000 subscribers in the first month.

www.timetobreathe.net

Exchange for ADSL

Business ISP Digital Exchange has become the first to announce a nationwide ADSL service, which will be available to subscribers from 1 June.

While ISPs such as Demon and Freeserve have run ADSL trials, Digital Exchange is the first to confirm prices and dates.

Offered via BT's ADSL service, access will cost £50 for speeds of 2Mb/s upstream and 256K downstream.

www.digitalexchange.co.uk

Digital Exchange: won the ADSL race

Now even more free

GoFree, which offers 0800 access in the Milton Keynes area, is extending its service to Halifax.

The *Halifax Evening Courier* is working in conjunction with the ISP to offer free access from 6pm on Friday through to midnight on Sunday. There are no monthly or registration fees, and sub-scription is via the Web site or one of the *Courier*'s free CDs.

www.halifaxcourier.co.uk

Web school

The sites, books and software that'll turn you from timid student into Professor of Web Site Design

Child's play, kid's stuff, easy as one, two, three – creating a Web site, it seems, is the sort of job the average third-former could knock off between lessons. Except that your own third-form year was largely spent carving your rubber into a dinosaur. Languages were never your thing, so you certainly aren't about to get your tongue around Java; ABC proved tricky enough, never mind HTML; and as for design, the art teacher used to be happy enough if you could restrict your daubs to paper rather than the fixtures and fittings.

The trouble is, you've had enough of small children and old ladies sniggering when you admit that you don't have a Web site. But relax – today's software tools allow you to create professional Web pages without ever typing in a line of code. Better still, there's a whole raft of books and sites out there to gently ease you through the learning process...

WORDS: STEVE SHIPSIDE; PICTURES: NICK WRIGHT

FrontPage 2000
Microsoft
AdobePageMill 3.0
Easily Create and Manage Pages for the Web
Adobe
Lynda Weinman
Dreamweaver 2 | Hands-On Training
Creating Web Pages for Dummies
The Confusion-Fn and Creating You
Lynda Weinman / Hands-On Training

New 5 floor shopping mall with over 150 stores now open at 187 Acacia Avenue, 323 London Road, 46a Blackbird Close, 7 Teal Crescent, 3 Union Street.....

www.TheVirtualMall.co.uk

the virtual mall .co.uk

SOFTWARE

WYSIWYG authoring software came into being to protect us mere mortals from the ugliness that is HTML, enabling us to create Web sites without learning scripting, codes or tags. From that starting point they've moved on to offer real power features – without demanding real power expertise. The leading programs all offer such complete feature sets that, for the beginner, the only real decider may well be how comfortable you find their look and feel...

MACROMEDIA DREAMWEAVER 3.0

£269 from Simply: ***www.simply.co.uk*** ★★★★★

Once you get used to the slightly unusual interface, the joy of Dreamweaver is that it combines a flexibility and friendliness well-suited to complete beginners, with editing and management tools for intermediate users looking to push back their envelope. Version 3.0 adds a number of natty touches, including a history 'palette' that helps you see what has been done to a page. This is really useful if there are several of you working on a site, and goes some way to answering the criticism that Dreamweaver, like other WYSIWYG editors, can spew out code that's incomprehensible to the HTML boys who have to pick up the pieces in the later stages.

A quick tag editor means that if you click on part of a page, you get a pop-up window to directly edit the source code of that tag. It may not sound of interest to beginners, but it is, because as well as letting you fine-tune as you gain confidence, it also means you can look at effects then click to see what tags went into producing them. More elaborate than FrontPage but still accessible to newbies, Dreamweaver is really for those who have, or think they may have, hopes of higher things than their first page. It's also, incidentally, good for people who have a Mac (unlike Fusion or HoTMetal).

MICROSOFT FRONTPAGE 98/2000

£104.45 from Dabs Direct:
www.dabs.com ★★★★★

The great thing about this software is the automated 'Wizard' approach: even a beginner can be nursed through the process of site creation. Your first home page becomes a question of little more than paying attention as the program asks what you want, helps you, and even fills in the gaps on your pages with dummy text and images.

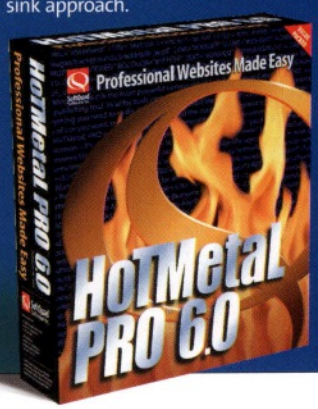
FrontPage 2000 adds to that with an array of management tools to help keep those sites live and kicking, including an alarm feature that tells you of broken links. This year's model also boasts dynamic HTML – pretty fancy for an entry-level package. Purists will point out that other packages have more features, but beginners won't care.

QUADSOFT HOTMETAL PRO

£85 from Software Paradise:
www.softwareparadise.co.uk
★★★

Great name, great product, but probably not for you. Nothing against HoTMetal Pro, but the fact remains that this really is the package of choice for your hard-core code monkey. Not to say that it doesn't have easily understood Wizards (it does) or that it demands a knowledge of HTML (it doesn't), but for the completely code-shy to invest in a package with this kind of control over DHTML would be to miss the point.

If, on the other hand, you know that you're going to have to master DHTML but want a package that will allow you to start at entry level, and allow you grow to through self-study courses, reference guides, DHTML scripts and style sheets, then HoTMetal Pro wins out with its everything-but-the-kitchen-sink approach.



NETOBJECTS FUSION 5.0

£207 from Micro Warehouse:
www.microwarehouse.co.uk
★★★★

NetObjects likes to position Fusion as an easy-to-learn tool, although it's unlikely to nudge FrontPage out of the affections of Net newbies. Where Fusion really scores over other packages, however, is in the amount of thought that's been given to helping you visualise a site's layout. Granted, if all you've got is a single page with a picture of your cat, then you won't care too much, but it's a feature of all sites, especially company sites, that they start to grow in all directions as content expands.

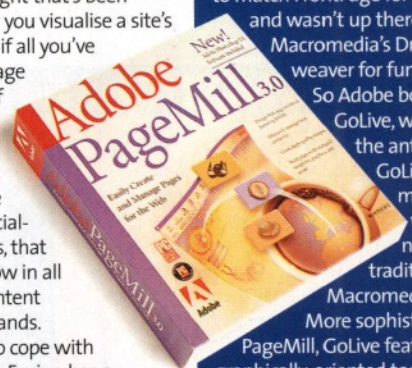
To cope with that, Fusion has a great site layout map, using colour coding to help you understand the hyperlink spaghetti junction that goes to make up the typical site. It also has the ability to set properties for any number of pages, helping to ensure a consistent look and feel across even the most sprawling of sites.

Originally one of the favourite tools for novice page creators, Fusion has grown up to be a serious proposal for small businesses.

ADOBE PAGEMILL/GOLIVE

£74 from Wstore:
www.wstore.co.uk ★★★★

PageMill used to take a bit of a knocking from the critics for its lack of Wizards, and the fact that it relied on dialog boxes to edit tables rather than the graphical tools found in other WYSIWYG editors. The result was a product that failed to match FrontPage for ease of use and wasn't up there with rival Macromedia's Dreamweaver for functionality. So Adobe bought GoLive, which upped the ante a little – GoLive's forte is multi-media, which up to now has traditionally been Macromedia's turf.

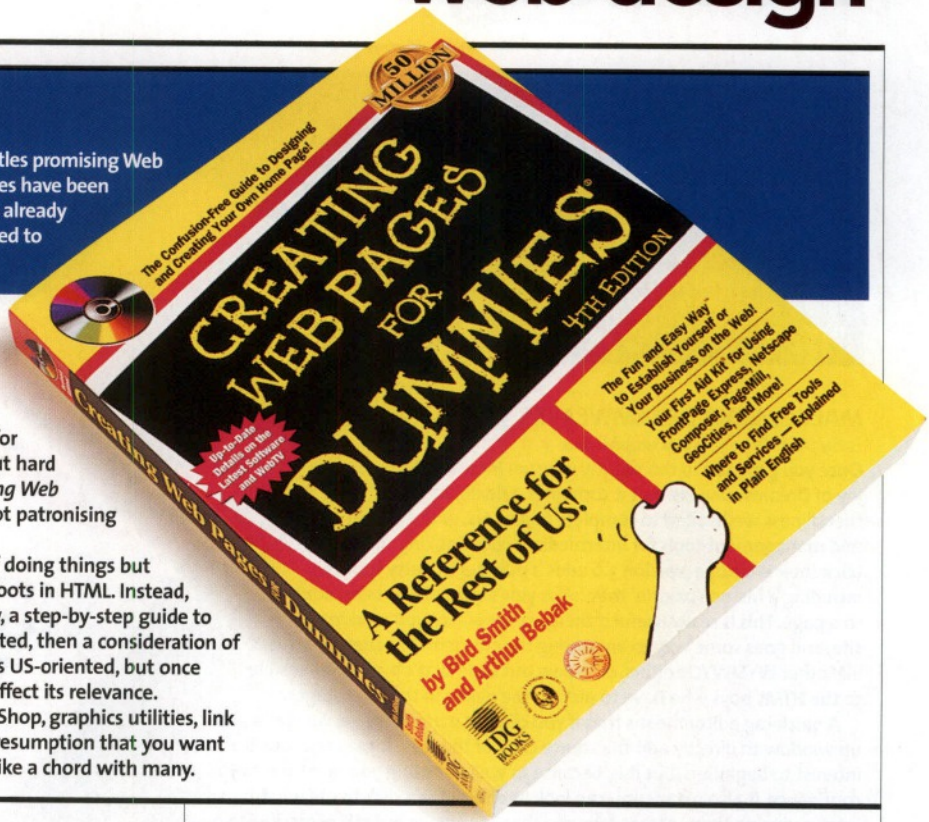


More sophisticated than PageMill, GoLive features more graphically-oriented tools and better graphical capabilities, as well as excellent QuickTime integration, making it a no-brainer if you're looking to add QuickTime movies to Web pages. Why would you want to add QuickTime movies? Because they don't entail the scripting required by alternative formats such as Real or Windows Media.

It would be nice to be offered the choice of formats, but until Macromedia responds, as it surely will, GoLive will remain first choice for multimedia mavens.

BOOKS

Booksellers' shelves are groaning under the weight of titles promising Web creation made easy – it's astonishing just how many trees have been felled in the name of the Internet. Since our satchels are already crammed with catapults and pet mice, however, we opted to narrow the field down to a couple of suggestions.


50 MILLION
The Confusion-Free Guide to Designing and Creating Your Own Home Page!
CREATING WEB PAGES FOR DUMMIES
4TH EDITION
Up-to-Date Details on the Latest Software and Web!
The Fun and Easy Way to Establish Yourself or Your Business on the Web!
Your First Aid Kit for Using FrontPage Express, Netscape Composer, PageMill, GeoCities, and More!
Where to Find Free Tools and Services – Explained in Plain English
A Reference for the Rest of Us!
by Bud Smith and Arthur Bebak
IDG BOOKS

CREATING WEB PAGES FOR DUMMIES (4TH EDITION)

£14.14 at Amazon: ***www.amazon.co.uk*** ★★★★

The *Dummies* volumes (there's one for just about every conceivable aspect of computing) are a proven success, for the simple reason that most mortals will happily fork out hard cash for the promise of 'confusion-free' anything. *Creating Web Pages* is a good example of the series – non-technical, not patronising and clearly laid out (if a bit sparse on graphics).

The guides are marketed as 'The Fun and Easy Way' of doing things but don't get your hopes up, as there aren't a whole lot of hoots in HTML. Instead, what you get is a good general round-up of terminology, a step-by-step guide to putting your pages together and getting your home hosted, then a consideration of the more twiddly options, like developing for Web TV. It's US-oriented, but once you've got over the use of the word 'darn' that doesn't affect its relevance.

The utilities on the accompanying CD (including PaintShop, graphics utilities, link checkers and a Dreamweaver trial) are handy, and the presumption that you want to do this on the cheap – if not actually for free – will strike a chord with many.

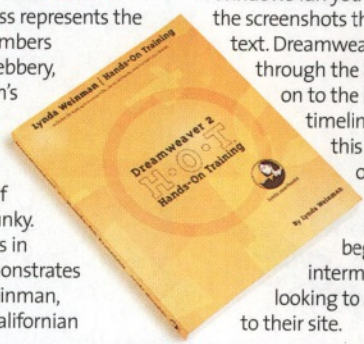
WEB PUBLISHING STEP BY STEP LEARNING KIT

£28.29 at Amazon: ***www.amazon.co.uk*** ★★★★

Step by Step is Microsoft Press' very own range of books on Gatesware – a sort of Listen With Billy. As with all the others (there's one for just about every MS product still supported) it doesn't waste time looking at the big issue; it just gets stuck into the nitty-gritty of knocking up your site using MS FrontPage 98. As with so many product-specific books there's not really anything here you can't find in the manual, but the simple tone and layout make it a great deal easier to follow than official documentation. What makes this package work, however, is the stuff on the CD – all the files to create a sample site, plus video files of the application in action. So if you're a total newbie scared to pull down a menu bar, this is the approach is for you. But others might find that the whiney voice on the tutorial gets right on their wick.

DREAMWEAVER 2.0 HANDS-ON TRAINING

£21.42 at the Internet Bookshop: ***www.bookshop.co.uk*** ★★★★



If Microsoft Press represents the painting-by-numbers approach to Webbery, Lynda Weinman's *Hands On Training* ('HOT') series likes to see itself as a bit more funky. One of the ways in which this demonstrates itself is that Weinman, being an arty Californian creative type, uses a Mac. The software on the CD is cross-platform so that's not a problem, but if you're a Windows fan you're not going to like the screenshots that illustrate the text. Dreamweaver HOT helps you through the basics then moves on to the likes of DHTML and timeline animation, so this book, unlike the others featured, is more for the ambitious beginner or intermediate Webmaster looking to add a flourish to their site.

AND THE WEB SITES

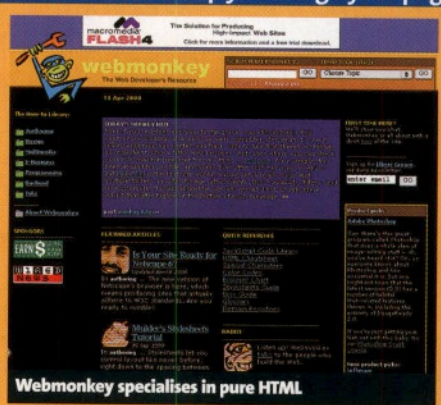
Use the Internet to help you design your page...

Save trees, save time, but most of all save money – that's the promise of online tuition. Don't turn your back on the bookshop, though – the Net is the natural home for info on all things Webby but the best examples, such as WebMonkey and Builder, tend to go more for tips and tricks than a pedestrian step-by-step approach.

WEBMONKEY *www.webmonkey.com* ★★★

WebMonkey takes a bit of a purist approach to the business of Web creation. Perhaps because of its parentage (it was a spin-off from those wacky people at HotWired), it sees itself as being right out there on the digital frontier, turning its snout up at the thought of using authoring tools because they can lead to messy code (heaven forbid!). Instead it evangelises pure HTML, for which it is very good.

The downside is that that can make it a tad off-putting for the real newcomer. It's a bit like those French teachers who insist that you should be able to recite irregular verbs before you even learn how to order two beers and a packet of peanuts.

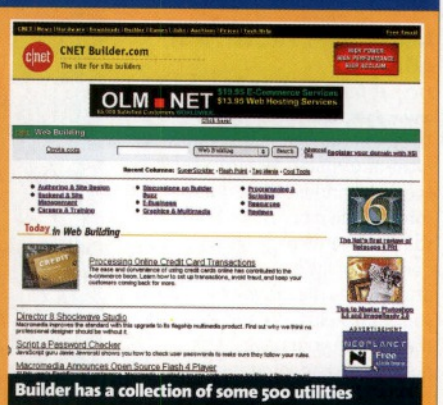


Webmonkey specialises in pure HTML

BUILDER *www.builder.com* ★★★★

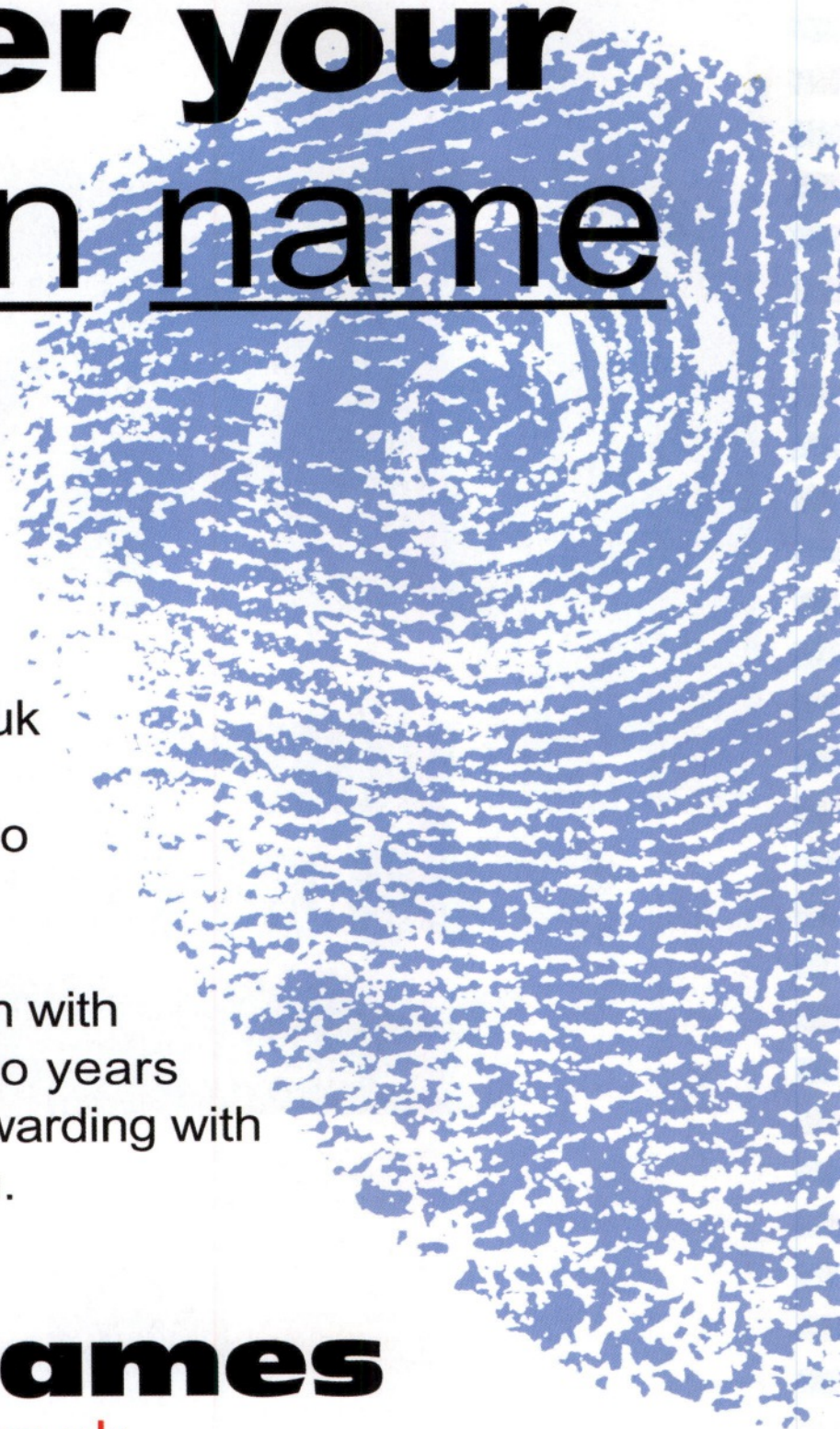
This is an astonishing collection of 500 utilities to download, plus some very advanced hints. But it's not that easy to navigate, catering more for a cherrypicking approach than beginners looking for a step-by-step.

That said, if you're beyond the My First Home Page stage, Builder comes into its own with a some really useful tips and a professional approach, focusing on phases such as 'Establish Your Mission' and 'Identify Your User'.



Builder has a collection of some 500 utilities

Make a unique marque ... register your domain name today!



Instant online name checking for:
.com | .co.uk | .org | .org.uk
.net | .uk.com | .uk.net
.gb.com | .gb.net | .uk.co

Our price includes:
Domain name registration with registry fees paid for two years **plus** e-mail and web forwarding with online user configuration.

simplynames
www.simplynames.co.uk

VISA MasterCard DELTA SWITCH

Tel:01684 893 020 E-mail:domains@simplynames.co.uk
PO Box 129, Malvern, Worcestershire, WR14 1XP, United Kingdom

The mummy didn't stand a chance against the angry villagers

Grab your slice of the Net

It's not too late to get a domain name of your own – and it doesn't have to cost you an arm and a leg

SOMETIMES THE INTERNET CAN seem like the opening day of the sales, as companies fall over themselves not simply to get online, but to make sure they bag the right Web address. For a business, it makes sense: having a rival buy the rights to use your trading name in cyberspace could spell commercial suicide. But now, individuals are registering themselves as 'domain names' – franksmith.co.uk, and so on. If you think that sounds weird, imagine the lunatic next door using your name to set up a Web site about your ongoing garden fence dispute... it all starts to make sense now, doesn't it?

It's quite simple to register a Web address. You can either do it through your own ISP, or go along to a company such as NetBenefit and do it there. There will be a fee involved – up to £100 a year, depending on the type of site you want to register – but as long as no-one else has already registered the same name, you're in business. They all have searchable databases, so you'll know straight away whether your name is still available. And don't forget all the derivatives: franksmith, frank.smith, frank_smith, and so on.

There are also companies like Freenetname, which will register your domain name for free; but you have to store your Web site on their servers and use them as your ISP.

The old system of registering domain names is starting to overload

THE NAME OF THE DOMAIN

Registering a domain name may be easy, but there's a whole load of bureaucratic work going on behind the scenes.

Web addresses break down into three elements. There's the 'www' bit, which simply tells your browser to look on the World Wide Web. Next comes the name of the company or individual that set up the site – Microsoft, Sony, the Spice Girls or whoever. Then there's '.com' or '.co.uk'.

This final part is known as the TLD – top-level domain name. There are several types. The most well-known, of course, is '.com', which is used to identify commercial organisations. Charities and non-profit organisations use the '.org' domain name, while companies that specialise in network technology get to call themselves '.net'. Educational institutions use the '.edu' domain name, and government departments use '.gov'.

Then of course, there are domain names that refer to specific countries, such as '.uk', or '.jp' for Japan.

These are used in conjunction with other top-level domain names to specify both the type of organisation and the country of origin. That's been good news for places which happen to have domain names that mean something in English, such as Tonga in the South Pacific: it has established a thriving registration business (***www.tonic.to***) in Web addresses ending in '.to'. Italy ('.it') has found itself similarly in demand.

There's a downside to the nation-by-nation approach to domain names. The address ***www.hotdog.com*** is owned by an American restaurant guide called Food.com, but type in ***www.hotdog.co.uk*** and you'll go to HotDog Software, a company which makes Web design software. Get those addresses confused and one of those companies has lost a potential customer. Some people have taken advantage of this situation to register domain names in the hope of selling them at a profit later on, a tactic sometimes known as 'cybersquatting'. You can't blag a name that's already trademarked, such as Microsoft or Sony, but there's nothing to stop you from registering a local Web address that contains commonplace words such as 'pizza' or 'sunshine'.

For example, the address ***www.pizza.co.uk*** is currently up for sale, and recently a man who had the bright idea of registering ***www.business.com*** a few years ago recently sold it for $7.5 million. There's even a company called Great Domains that specialises in buying and selling memorable domain names.

THE $30M WEBSITE

Who needs a personalised car number plate? Move into the new millennium with some of the high-profile Web addresses on sale at Great Domains: *www.greatdomains.com*

- ***www.america.com*** $30,000,000
- ***www.lesbians.com*** $5,000,000
- ***www.conceited.com*** $1,000,000
- ***www.drugs.com*** $823,456
- ***www.bob.com*** $750,000
- ***unbeatable.com*** $650,000
- ***www.perfect.com*** $94,000
- ***www.ihateshopping.com*** $69,000
- ***www.irishstagnights.com*** $500
- ***www.unzipmenow.com*** $500

NO MORE NAMES

The organisation that handles the actual process of registering domain names for the entire world is Network Solutions Inc (NSI). This is – would you believe – a private company that was handed the jobby the US government in the early days of the Internet, and which is now worth billions of dollars. Companies such as NetBenefit and ISPs that offer domain registration services are acting under licence from Network Solutions, which still maintains the central worldwide database of Web addresses.

However, Network Solutions only handles the administrative side of the registration business. The actual rules dictating what works as a domain name and what doesn't are specified by a separate outfit called ICANN – the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers.

ICANN's biggest problem is that the current system of allocating domain names is starting to overload. Network Solutions registered five million new Web addresses last year alone – that's one every six seconds – and the small selection of top-level domain names currently available simply isn't able to accommodate all the people and organisations that want their own easy-to-remember Web addresses.

ICANN has acknowledged that the best solution is to come up with a whole load of new domain names, but they haven't actually decided which ones to use yet. A look at ICANN's site reveals it to be a rather dull organisation, but some of the suggestions it has received are anything but stuffy. There's a free speech organisation in the US called the Consumer Project on Technology, which recently sent a letter to ICANN proposing new top-level domain names such as: .sucks, .isnotgreen, .isnotfair, .unite, .customers and .complaints.

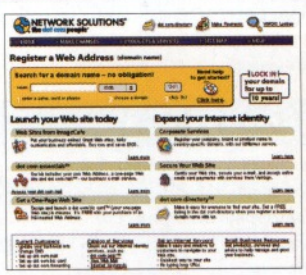
The idea is that such domain names would 'facilitate criticism of a firm or organization'. So if you think – purely hypothetically and for the sake of argument, of course – that a well-known burger franchise is ruining the environment, you could register a Website called 'www.burgerchain.sucks' or 'www.burgerchain.isnotgreen'.

Other suggestions from various groups are '.union' for trade union Websites; and '.sex' or '.xxx', which pretty much speak for themselves.

Anyone can register as a member of ICANN and put forward suggestions for new domain names, so why not sign up and send them an email if you've got any good ideas of your own.

In the meantime, put your skates on and register your own site name as quickly as possible – before someone else does and decides to charge you $10 million for it.

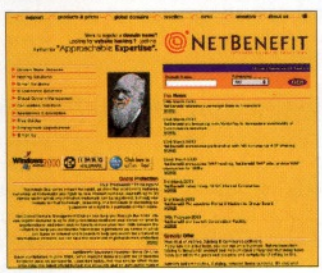
THE REGISTRATION GAME



NETWORK SOLUTIONS

www.networksolutions.com

An impressive range of business tools with registrations from $35 upwards at this huge US site.



NETBENEFIT

www.netbenefit.com

Specialising in British and European registrations from £85 per annum, this is the place for .co.uk outfits.

ICANN REGISTRATION

members.icann.org

Sign up with ICANN and have your say in the domain name debate, thanks to its 'Bottom Up' policy.

FREE DOMAIN NAMES

www.freenetname.co.uk

Use these fellas as your ISP and they'll set up a domain name for you for nothing.

WORDS: CLIFF JOSEPH; PICTURES: HULTON GETTY

Web browsers

You spend a lot of time looking through it, so it's important to get a browser that suits you. Let *the net* show you the options available

What do I use to explore the Web?

The software you use to look at pages on the Web is called a 'browser'. The most popular are Microsoft Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator. If you have a PC running Windows 95 or 98, you will almost certainly have Internet Explorer already installed. However, Navigator and other browsers such as Opera run in much the same way.

What are my options?

Statistically, Internet Explorer is the most popular browser on the planet. Together with its nearest competitor, Netscape Navigator, it accounts for 97 percent of all Web page hits.

With the facilities that the two offer, it's hardly surprising that they rule the roost. Internet Explorer 5.0 is the current leader of the Internet pack. It's packed – jam-packed, in fact – with features.

Netscape Navigator 4.08 represents the only serious competition to Internet Explorer. But it still can't reach the dizzying heights of IE – in fact it's slipped so much in popularity that Web site designers now often make sure their pages look right in IE alone.

You would've thought that with the market pretty much sewn up between the big two, no-one would be foolhardy enough to attempt to write a rival browser – but there are others. Opera, for example, is a tiny little thing at 1.5Mb (compared with Netscape Communicator's 10Mb+). It's fast, but it's let down by an ugly appearance. The Opera equivalent for Macs is iCab. It has many of the excellent features of Opera, but it looks and works even better.

If you want a real rebel browser, try Lynx. It's text only, so it cuts down on download times. For children (or adults who are kids at heart), there's Surf Monkey, which lets you blow up Web pages you don't like, or gloop green paint all over them.

Saving sites in Internet Explorer

Typing in the name of a Web site every time you want to visit it can be a pain – especially if it's a long and complex name. Fortunately, all Web browsers have a way of saving the locations of sites you like, so you can revisit them without needing to retype them. In Internet Explorer these saved site addresses are called Favourites, while Netscape Navigator calls them Bookmarks.

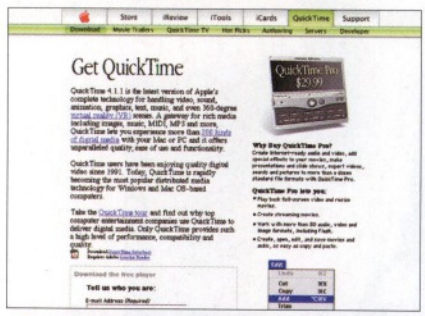
1 From the Favourites menu, choose 'Add to Favourite.' The keyboard shortcut for the move is Control D.

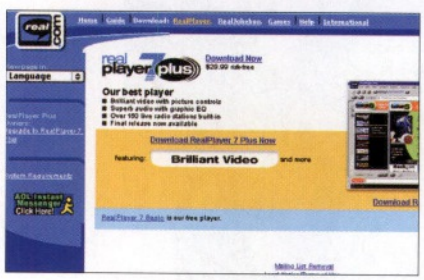
2 When asked whether you want to subscribe to the site, choose the 'No, just add this page to my Favourites' option. You'll see the title of the page in the 'Name' section of the site; if this is not descriptive enough for you, type a five- or six-word description of the site. Then hit OK.

3 You will now find that the site has been added to your Favourites menu. To visit the site, just click 'Favourites' and then go to the menu list and select it.

Supercharge your browser

Your basic Internet Explorer set-up comes with several 'plug-ins'. These are additional pieces of software which enable your browser to play, for example, multimedia effects. If you arrive at a site requiring a plug-in that you don't have, you'll be prompted to download and install it. The plug-ins you'll need to get the most from your browsing include: RealPlayer at ***www.real.com*** (bottom), which lets you watch videos or listen to music; Shockwave at ***www.shockwave.com*** for animation and sound; and Apple's QuickTime (right) at ***www.apple.com/quicktime/***, which plays video and sound.





Installing a plug-in

1 When you require a plug-in, a prompt appears. Click 'Get Plug-in' and you'll go to the plug-in's home page.

2 Click on the link where you can 'Get' or 'Download' the plug-in.

3 Explorer will put the plug-in inside the correct folder on your PC.

4 Go back to the site by pressing the Back button on the Explorer toolbar and enjoy it in its full glory.

Browser alternatives

Proof that there's more to browsing than Explorer or Netscape

MAC BROWSERS

BROWSER	RATING	FOR	AGAINST	DOWNLOAD FROM
ICAB	★★★★	Fast. Gets rid of irritating ad banners	Could support more features	www.icab.de
HOTJAVA	★★	Pretty showcase for Java technology	Slow; somewhat unstable	java.sun.com/products/hotjava/3.0/
INTERNET EXPLORER	★★★★	State-of-the-art browsing on the Mac	Can be memory-hungry	www.microsoft.com/Mac/IE/
LYNX	★★★★	Blazingly fast at fact-finding	If it isn't text, Lynx isn't interested	www.lirmm.fr/~gutkneco/maclynx/
NETSCAPE NAVIGATOR	★★★	It's almost as good as IE...	Doesn't display pages as prettily as IE	www.netscape.com

PC BROWSERS

AMAYA	★★	Great for those into Net standards...	...not for those who aren't	www.w3.org/Amaya/User/BinDist.html
ARACHNE	★★	It runs in DOS and is written by Czechs	A pain to set up	arachne.cz
CUSTOM BROWSER	★	Adds minimal extra customisation to IE	It's just IE with an ad in the top panel	www.custombrowser.com
HOTJAVA	★★	Pretty showcase for Java technology	Slow, though not as bad as on the Mac	java.sun.com/products/hotjava/3.0/
INTERNET EXPLORER	★★★★★	For the moment, the king of all browsers	Hard to fault, unless you really try	www.microsoft.com
LYNX	★★★★	The original text-only browser	If it isn't text, Lynx isn't interested	lynx.browser.org
MOSAIC	★★★	Good for developers	Feels old. Is old. Not updated since 1996	www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/SDG/Software/mosaic-w/
NEOPLANET	★★★★	Funky interface replacement for Explorer	Internet Explorer in new clothes	www.neoplanet.com
NETSCAPE NAVIGATOR	★★★★	Wide range of features for hardcore users	Doesn't display pages as prettily as IE	www.netscape.com
OPERA	★★★★	Faster than IE or Netscape	Looks absolutely horrible	www.opera.com
SURF MONKEY	★★★★★	Lots of fun – blowing up sites is great	Designed for smaller screens?	www.surfmonkey.com

*free 30-day trial version available

What all those browser buttons mean

Understanding the toolbar

BACK Clicking this button takes you back to the last page. Click it once and you'll go back one page, or hold to see the last 10

STOP If you decide that you don't want to view a page while it's loading, just hit Stop

HOME This button takes you to the page you viewed when you started your browser

FAVOURITES Pop-up window containing a list of your Favourite sites – or you can view them from the menu

MAIL Opens your email program

PRINT Prints the page

GO When you've entered an address, hit Enter or click here to go to the site

LINKS A quick shortcut to some of your favourite sites, which you can add to

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Back Forward Stop Refresh Home Search Favorites History Mail Print Edit Related
Address www.thenetnow.co.uk.
Go Links

FORWARD If you've used the Back button to move back a page or two, the Forward button should take you back again

REFRESH This makes the browser redraw the page on the screen – useful if you have stopped a page from loading

SEARCH This button opens Internet Explorer's search options where you'll find short-cuts to finding what you want on the Internet

HISTORY Clicking this button produces a list of all the sites visited over the past few days or weeks – so if you found a really useful page two days ago but forgot to add it to your Favourites list, you can easily find it again by looking here

EDIT If you have a Web page editor, you can edit a Web page by clicking here

RELATED SITES Launches the Explorer 'Alexa' plug-in which provides extra search options

Viewing your browser

1 TITLE BAR Tells you the name of the site you're visiting and the program you're currently using

2 MENU BAR The range of options you can use while navigating the Internet

3 IE LOGO Contains a link to the IE home page, in case you're lost

4 ADDRESS The address of the site you're opening, including the http:// prefix

5 GO BUTTON Click to go to the address you've typed in (or hit the Return key)

6 WEB SITE WINDOW The whole page you're opening

7 BANNER ADVERTISEMENT Click here to visit the service advertised in this small banner

8 INDEX What you'll find on the site. Click on an option to enter it

9 TEXT LINKS Move your cursor to the underlined text and you'll be able to open the relevant link by clicking on it

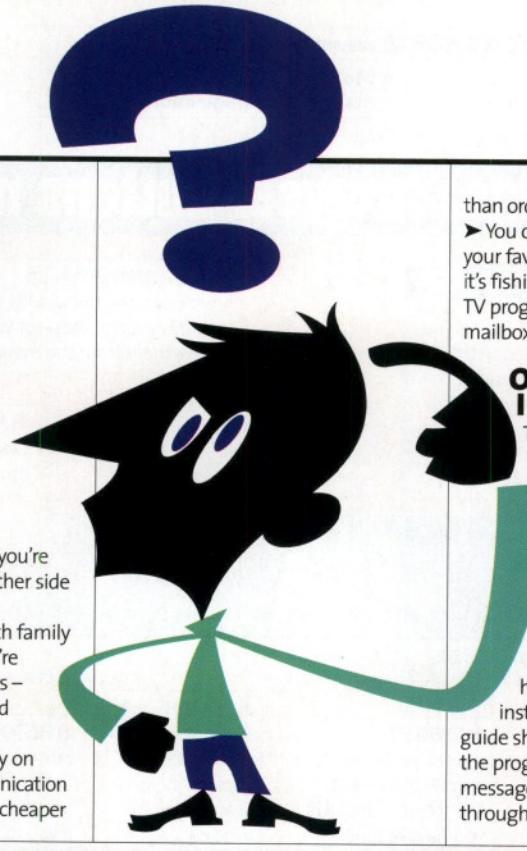
10 SEARCH Will find something specific on the site for you

11 DOWNLOAD DATA This space tells you what Explorer is doing – or which site it could open when your cursor passes over a link

1
Microsoft Internet Explorer
2
3
4
5
Go
9
25 Jan 2000 15:45
thenetnow
BRINGING THE BEST OF THE WEB TO YOUR BROWSER
8
Opinion
Fun stuff
Best of the Web
What Website?
Help section
Software centre
In the mag
Subscriptions
Competitions
6
TOP NEWS STORY
The net launches new Web site
The net, Britain's best-selling Internet magazine, has revealed] its new Web site. Offering a constantly updated consumer news service, links to the best sites on the Web as rated by the magazine and also housing the funniest email humour around it makes an ideal home page. Full Story
LATEST NEWS Business
THE BEST MEDICINE
There's no faster way of getting the world to laugh than to email a joke to all your friends, who then email it to theirs, who then email it to theirs. Now we've collected all the best email jokes and attachments in one place.
Go to fun stuff
IGNORE THE HYPE
It might seem like every man and his dog is investing in Internet shares and making pots of money, but is it all getting out of hand? Columnist Tim Richardson thinks we should all calm down a little bit.
Full Story
WHAT WEBSITE?
Find the very best of the Web in seconds
SHOW ME THE WEB
ULTIMATE HELP
We've collected all you need to know and put it in the plainest of English.
PLEASE HELP ME!
SUBSCRIPTIONS
No more queues at the newsagent in the rain if you subscribe to 'the net' today
LET ME BUY NOW
THE NET MAG June issue on sale May 10, 2000
7
It's more than just a car.
10
Net news
word or phrase
GO FIND
BRITAIN'S BIGGEST SELLING INTERNET MAGAZINE
WHAT HI-FI?
CD PLAYERS TO DIE FOR!
LATEST ISSUE ON SALE NOW AT OUR LOCAL NEWSAGENT
11
Done
Local intranet

Email

Not yet set up your email software? Follow our guide to Outlook Express



What is email?

Email is a way of sending messages around the Internet. While early programs could only handle plain text, most can now carry pictures and even video clips and sound.

So why should I use it?

➤ It's a lot cheaper to email a friend than to phone them long distance.

➤ It's delivered almost instantly – there's no seven-day wait if you're emailing someone on the other side of the globe.

➤ You can keep in touch with family and friends, even while they're away on business or holidays – they can visit a cybercafé and check their mail from there.

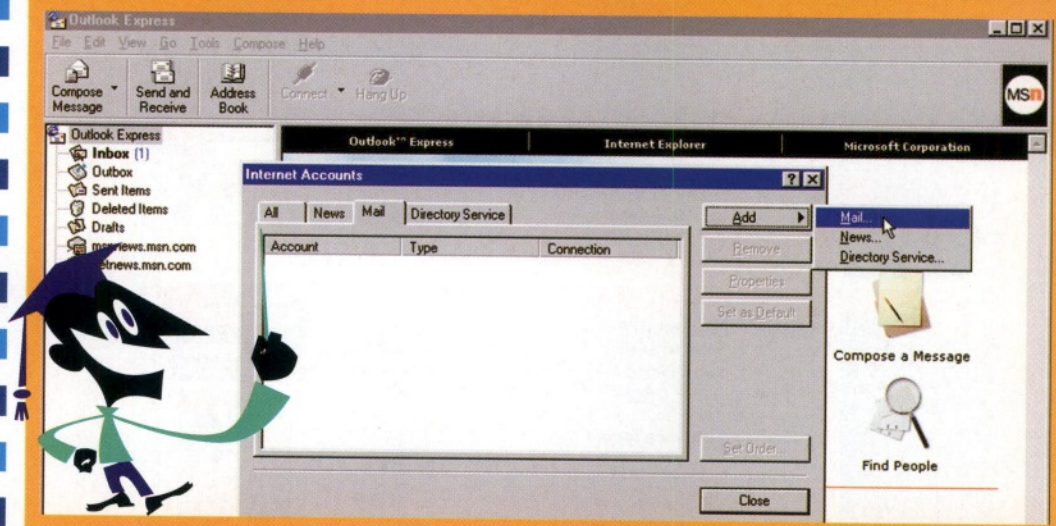
➤ Many companies now rely on email as a means of communication because it's much faster and cheaper than ordinary or 'snail mail'.

➤ You can have information on your favourite subjects – whether it's fishing, the stock market, or a TV programme – delivered to your mailbox every day.

Okay, so how do I use it?

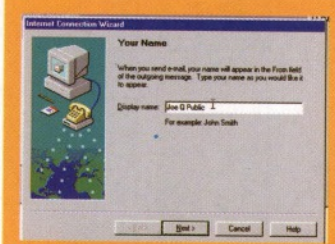
There are lots of email packages, but the one most widely used is Microsoft's Outlook Express. If you've bought a PC in the last two or three years, or you've downloaded Microsoft Internet Explorer for either Mac or PC, you'll already have Outlook Express installed. Our step-by-step guide shows you how to configure the program, create an email message, send it, and then read through the mail you've been sent.

1 Getting started with Outlook Express

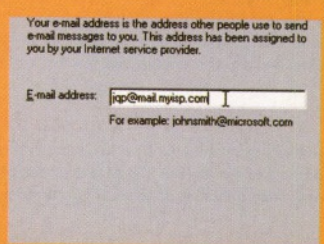


1 From the Start menu on your desktop, click Programs and then Outlook Express. If you are asked where you want it to store messages, select the pre-set or 'default' folder. The folder is kept in the Program Files folder on your hard drive.

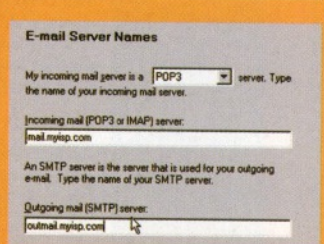
2 Once Outlook Express has loaded, go to the Accounts box from the Tools menu, and click the Mail tab shown in the picture on the left. This will show you any mail accounts you already have set up, and allows you to create a new one. For the purposes of this exercise we are going to create a new email account. Next, click Add, and select Mail.



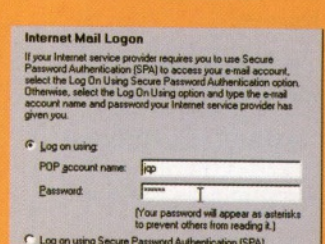
3 The Internet Connection Wizard will now guide you through the steps you need to take. First, enter your full name.


Your e-mail address is the address other people use to send e-mail messages to you. This address has been assigned to you by your Internet service provider.
E-mail address:
jqp@mail.myisp.com
For example: johnsmith@microsoft.com

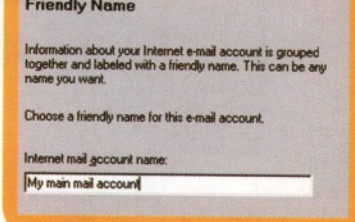
4 Type in your email address. This will have been given to you by your Internet service provider or ISP.


E-mail Server Names
My incoming mail server is a
POP3
server. Type the name of your incoming mail server.
Incoming mail (POP3 or IMAP) server:
mail.myisp.com
An SMTP server is the server that is used for your outgoing e-mail. Type the name of your SMTP server.
Outgoing mail (SMTP) server:
outmail.myisp.com

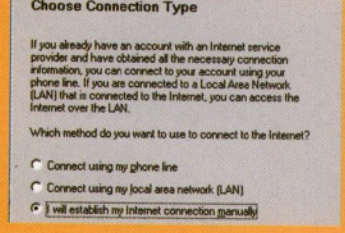
5 Enter the names of the email POP3/IMAP server in order to get incoming and outgoing mail. Call your ISP's helpline if you're unsure.


Internet Mail Logon
If your Internet service provider requires you to use Secure Password Authentication (SPA) to access your e-mail account, select the Log On Using Secure Password Authentication option. Otherwise, select the Log On Using option and type the e-mail account name and password your Internet service provider has given you.
Log on using:
POP account name:
jqp
Password:
(Your password will appear as asterisks to prevent others from reading it.)
Log on using Secure Password Authentication (SPA)

6 Type in your email address – just the part before the '@' sign – and your password. Again, your ISP should have given you these details.


Friendly Name
Information about your Internet e-mail account is grouped together and labeled with a friendly name. This can be any name you want.
Choose a friendly name for this e-mail account.
Internet mail account name:
My main mail account

7 Outlook Express asks for a 'friendly name' to give to your email account. We've called ours 'My main email account' for simplicity.


Choose Connection Type
If you already have an account with an Internet service provider and have obtained all the necessary connection information, you can connect to your account using your phone line. If you are connected to a Local Area Network (LAN) that is connected to the Internet, you can access the Internet over the LAN.
Which method do you want to use to connect to the Internet?
Connect using my phone line
Connect using my local area network (LAN)
I will establish my Internet connection manually

8 Outlook Express can automatically dial into your ISP for you, but it's probably best to connect manually. You can use Outlook offline, writing and managing your mail and then connect in order to send and receive messages. Choose the 'I will establish my Internet connection manually' option.

MORE EMAIL HELP AND ADVICE @ www.thenetnow.co.uk

- ★ Creating an email address book
- ★ Email etiquette
- ★ Filtering your email messages
- ★ Sending pictures and files via email

BEGINNER'S TIP

Add a 'signature' to your messages. A signature is like a calling card appended to the bottom of your email message. It might contain your email address, full name and phone number. To make one, go to the Tools menu in Outlook Express, choose Options and select Stationery and click on the Signature button. Type in the signature text you want to appear at the bottom of each message.

INTERMEDIATE TIP

Often, you'll want to pass a file to someone as part of your email message. This is known as 'attaching' the file, and is supported by most email packages. Remember that a large file will take longer to send. Compressing it using a shareware package like WinZip on the PC will shrink it, but the receiver the file will need a copy of the same program to re-expand it – so check before you send.

ADVANCED TIP

You can set up several different email accounts. Outlook Express will check each one for new mail when you go online. This is useful if you have separate work and personal email accounts. To add extra accounts, go to the Tools menu, select Options and click on New Account. Go through the 'Getting Started' steps again below, entering the new settings.

EMAIL OPTIONS If you don't want to use Outlook Express, try these alternatives for size

EUDORA LIGHT

www.eudora.com

A very popular, free email package. Includes lots of great features. Doesn't support reading news-groups, but copes happily with 'rich content email' – mail that includes sound, images and so on.

✔ Lots of features

✘ None

HOTMAIL

www.hotmail.com

A Web-based email program. Gives you a free email address, and can be accessed from any computer with a Web browser. Can also check email from a non-Web-based account.

✔ Accessed from any computer

✘ You need to be online to read or compose mail

EUDORA PRO 4.3

www.eudora.com

Commercial bigger brother to Eudora Light. Has all the features of Lite, but also allows you to check your mail from several different accounts easily.

✔ Supports multiple mailboxes, spellchacker, email filtering

✘ It'll set you back nearly £30

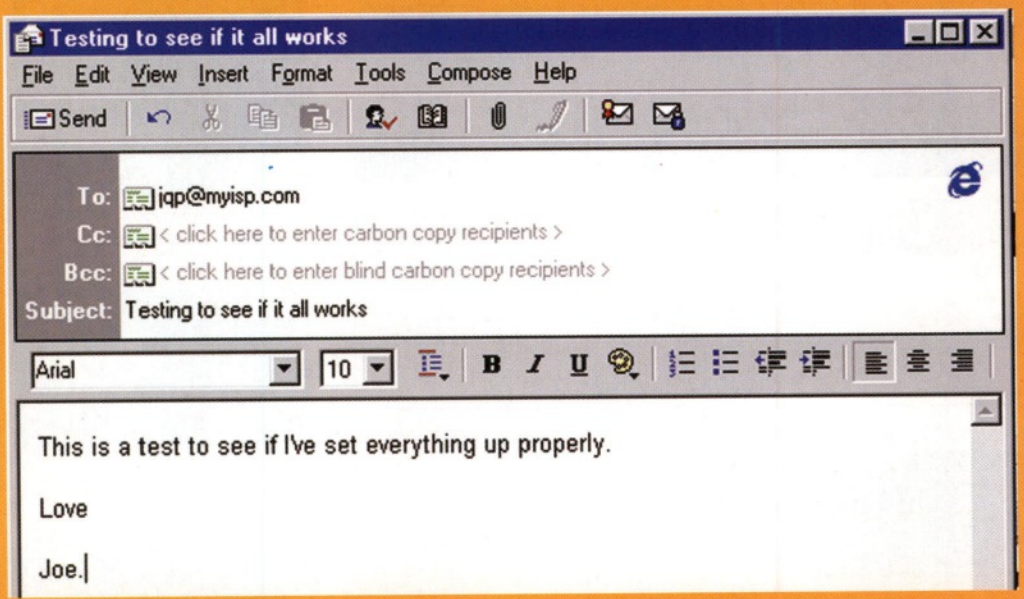
OUTLOOK 2000

www.microsoft.com Commercial bigger brother to Outlook Express. Includes an address book, to-do list and calendar, all of which link very elegantly in to the email section of the program.

✔ Integrates well with address book, diary and scheduler

✘ It'll set you back around £125

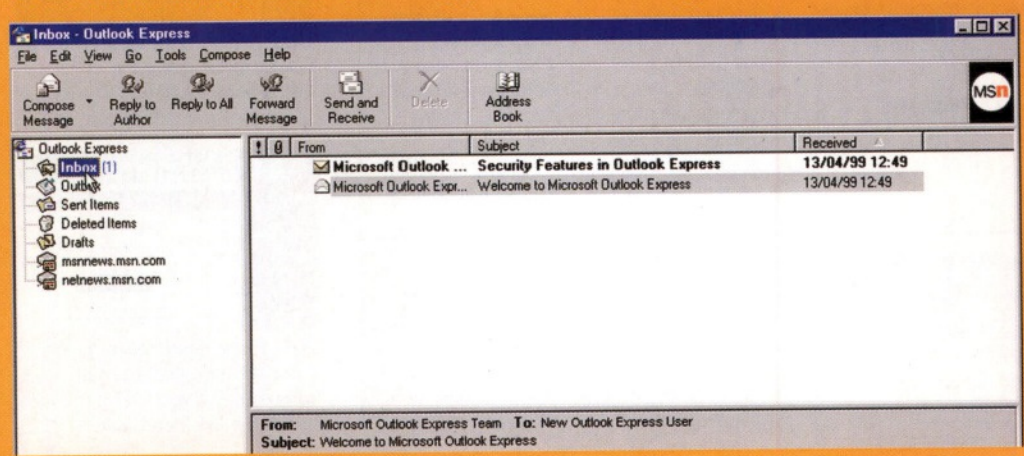
2 Composing your first email message



COMPOSING A MESSAGE

To create a message, click 'Compose Message'. If you click the small arrow just to the right, you will see that there are several pre-defined graphic message templates. But for now, just click on the button itself. Type your own email address in the 'To' field – you'll send an email to yourself to check that everything is working correctly. Enter a subject, for example 'Test Message', and in the body area just type a short message. From the File menu you can click Send to send your message now if you're online. Alternatively, if you're working offline click Send Later. This allows you to create more messages and have them ready for sending when you're ready to log on to the Net.

3 Sending, receiving & reading email



SENDING & RECEIVING MAIL

To send and receive mail, connect to the Net, then click the Send and Receive button. This will check for mail and download any new messages, at the same time sending any outgoing messages you have created. Once the program has stopped receiving mail, you can disconnect from the Net if you wish, to save phone costs. Click on In Box to the left of the screen to access the messages you have received. Click on the message to read its contents.

Online chat

How can you get to meet people from all over the world for the price of a local call? Easy – use *the net*'s guide to chat

What is online chat?

Online chat lets you communicate with others – often in real time. In other words, you type in comments, send them over the Net and they're seen almost immediately. And you're only paying for a local phone call – even if the person you are 'talking' to happens to be on the other side of the world.

What does it let me do?

- 'Chat' with friends and relatives in other countries without running up massive phone bills.
- Join in an online discussion with an expert on your favourite subject.
- Ask a celebrity questions during a moderated 'conference'.
- Talk randomly to people on the other side of the world.

DON'T PULL THAT FACE ROUND HERE

'Smileys' are a way of including some indication of emotion in your messages. They are useful when, for example, you are making a joke and you want to be sure that the person at the other end of the line realises you're not serious. Hang a relevant smiley on the end of your sentence by typing in the relevant characters – but do try not to over-use these things. To 'read' them, just turn the page 90 degrees to the left ;-) OK? Here are the four most used smileys:

- :-) The original smiley. Indicates a joke, or just a happy person!
- ;-) Wink
- :-o Shock (an open mouth)
- :-(Unhappy

BEGINNER'S TIP

Don't register your details unless you really want to

Often chat software will ask you for your name, and sometimes other info. Be wary about giving this; you don't know what they'll be used for.

INTERMEDIATE TIP

Be careful out there

If you are looking for romance online, be careful. As you would with press ads, let someone know where you're going if you meet up.

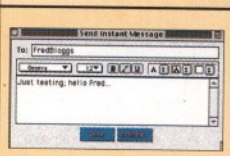
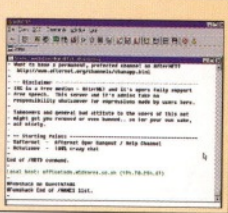
ADVANCED TIP

Go one step further

If text chat seems a bit flat, try 3D chat, where users take on a 'persona' and actually walk round chat rooms. Try ***www.thepalace.com*** for starters.

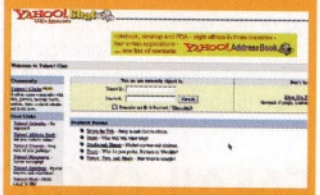
What kinds of Internet chat can I try?

There are several programs and methods for chatting online. It can get a bit confusing, so let's look at the main options

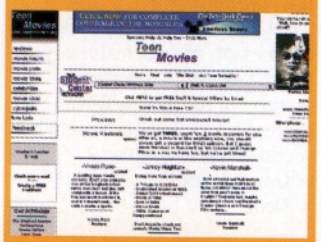
TYPE OF CHAT		FOR & AGAINST	CHAT LINK
LIVE ON A WEB SITE This kind of chat takes place within the window of your browser on a Web site. Everything you type in can immediately be seen by the other people viewing the Web page – and everything anyone else types in can be seen by you.		**FOR** Easy to use; no extra software required to run it. **AGAINST** Works on someone's Web site, so the subject will be dictated by them and private chat is unlikely.	***www.talkcity.com*** Online community where you can talk on various subjects, including romance and current affairs.
MODERATED SESSIONS Moderated chats are 'supervised' by a chat room host. In other words, you type in your message and a person sitting at the other end of the line decides whether or not to allow your comments or questions to be displayed. This is the norm for celebrity chats.		**FOR** Discussions are sensibly run. Plonkers may be screened out. **AGAINST** Only take place at certain times because they require a moderator to be present on the site. Censorship...	***chat.beeb.com*** The BBC's celebrity chat service with daily visits from the network's top stars.
REAL-TIME USING EXTRA SOFTWARE Software such as AOL's Instant Messenger and ICQ allow you to chat with other people in real time – either a group of people together, or one-on-one. You don't use a Web browser; dedicated software takes care of everything for you.		**FOR** Instant response; you can chat privately to one person. **AGAINST** Requires extra software; some firms don't allow this to be installed on their PCs, so you may not be able to chat at work.	***www.aol.co.uk/aim*** ***www.icq.com*** Chat one-to-one with your friends in real time on the Net. AOL's Instant Messenger and ICQ software are two of the most popular.
IRC This is Internet Relay Chat. It's a way of talking to many people at once using special software. IRC software can be a pain to use, however – it was, after all, modelled on Citizens' Band radio.		**FOR** Useful, technical chats are often held on IRC channels. **AGAINST** Software is difficult to use; IRC users can be impatient with newcomers.	***www.mirc.com*** Although it can be tricky to get used to, mIRC is the best software for IRC chat. ***www.ircle.com*** IRC client for Macs

CHAT ROOMS

Want to have a natter about some of the subjects you've read about in *the net* this month? Try these

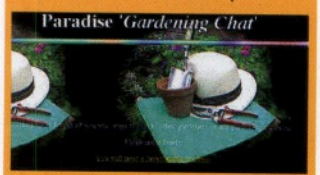


uk.chat.yahoo.com
Chat about anything that takes your fancy in Yahoo's chat rooms

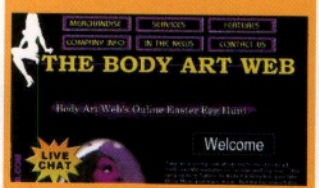


www.teenmovies.org
Natter about all the new (and old) releases at Teen Movies

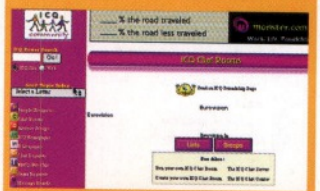
members.aol.com/AMRWEATHER/chat.html Find out what the weather is like across the pond



www.maigold.co.uk/chat.htm
Confer with green-fingered gardeners around the world



www.bodyartweb.com
Will a tattoo hurt? Log on here and someone is sure to tell you



www.icq.com/icqchat/Eurovision/
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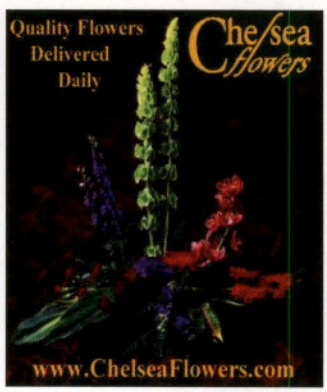

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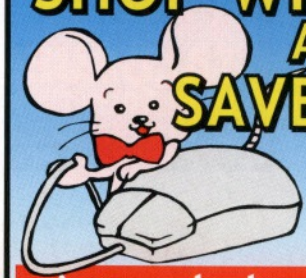

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INGRID SEYNHAEVE

Supermodels surf, too, you know. Belgian-born cover girl Ingi reveals her five favourites

How did you first get into the Internet?
I have always been interested in computers and finally bought one last year.

What do you use the Net for?
Since I bought my computer I have become increasingly interested in researching new products and subjects on the Net and I know I can log on and do this wherever I am in the world. I also use it to look up my stocks, find out about news around the world, shopping for books and spotting the new catwalk trends.

I travel so much that time differences make it hard to stay in touch with my friends so email and the Net is the easiest, quickest and cheapest way of contacting people. It has definitely become an integral part of my life.

If you surf, I think you should have among your favourite sites a newspaper/magazine site or an information-type one, a clothing store, a health one and a how-to-fix things site.

Do many other models surf the Net in between modelling sessions?
Most models are on the Internet actually – I guess for the same reason I am. We tend to fly so much which is perfect for writing long emails to friends. It's very handy to buy presents for people as well. Sites such as Changeslive.com are great for buying gifts and then having them sent directly to friends and family, which is what a lot of us seem to do.

How do you feel that the fashion industry is maximising the benefits of the Internet?
Nearly all of the fashion industry is using the Net now. It is a very fast, cost-effective way to expose the world to a product whether that be a model agency, a beauty product or piece of clothing – it is amazing that you can see and buy anything you want on the Net. The sites that sell products and clothing are growing extremely fast now that they have tightened up online credit card security. People aren't scared to place orders online any more.

Fashion and the Internet go very well together. It is a very exciting time for all concerned and the fashion industry is going to flourish even more worldwide with the benefit of the Net.

Do you see a day when we'll be viewing virtual models on the virtual catwalks?
Anything is possible; it wouldn't surprise me at all if this concept already exists!

***Ingrid Seynhaeve** is the face of health and beauty site Changeslive.com and has appeared in* Vogue, Elle, Harper's Bazaar, Max *and* Paris Match

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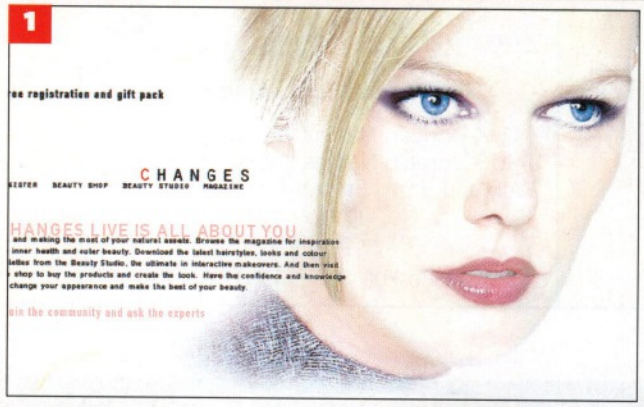
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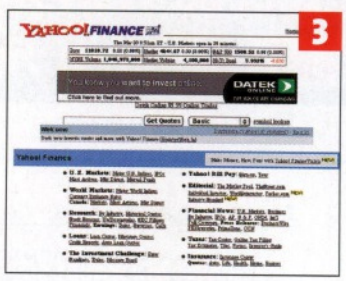

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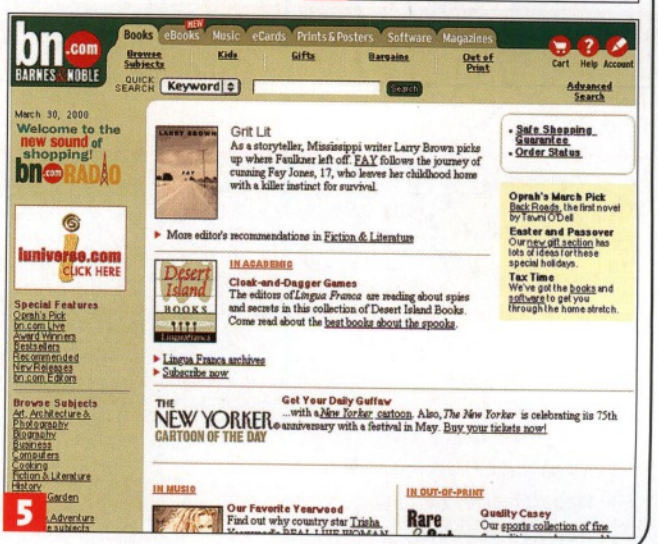

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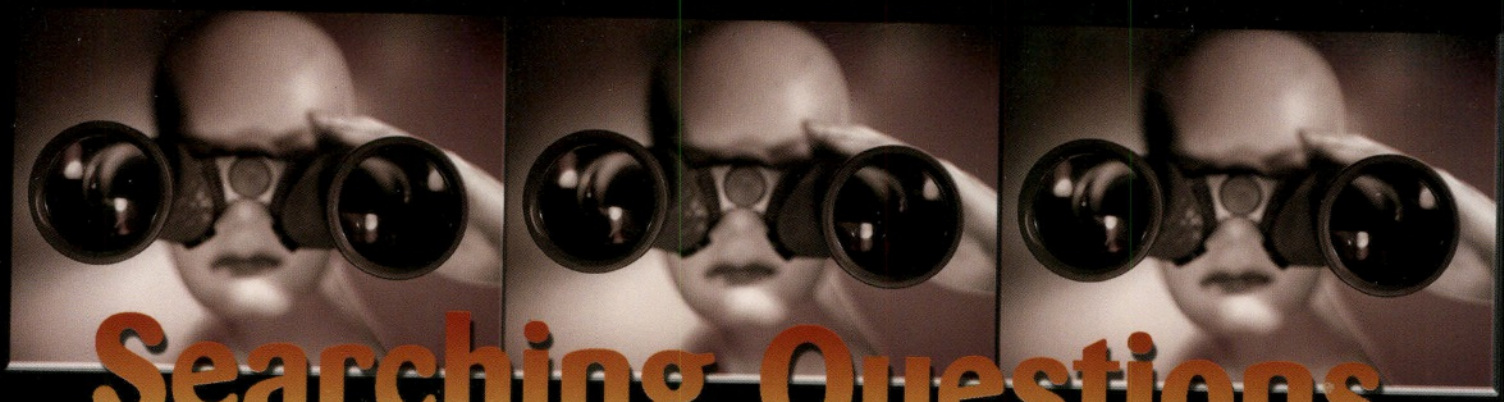

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